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JAMES LACKINGTON.

Published by Hunt. and Clarke. York. Street. 1828.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

A Collection

OF THE

MOST INSTRUCTIVE AND AMUSING

LIVES

EVER PUBLISHED,

WRITTEN BY THE PARTIES THEMSELVES.

WITH BRIEF INTRODUCTIONS, AND COMPENDIOUS SEQUELS CARRYING ON THE NARRATIVE TO THE DEATH OF EACH WRITER.

VOL. XVIII.—JAMES LACKINGTON

18

LONDON:
WHITTAKER, TREACHER, AND ARNOT
AVE-MARIA-LANE.

MDCCCXXX.

Biogr. C. 442 m/18

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

FORTY-FIVE FIRST YEARS

OF

THE LIFE

OF

JAMES LACKINGTON,

BOOKSELLER.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF,

IN FORTY-SEVEN LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

FROM THE LATEST EDITION.

LONDON:

WHITTAKER, TREACHER, AND ARNOT

AVE-MARIA-LANE.

MDCCCXXX.

Careto our coffin adds a nail no doubt,
And ev'ry grin, so merry, draws one out;
  I own I like to laugh, and hate to sigh,
And think, that risibility was giv'n
For human happiness, by gracious heav'n,
  And that we came not into life to cry;
To wear long faces, just as if our maker,
The God of goodness, was an undertaker,
Well pleas'd to wrap the soul's unlucky mien,
In sorrow's dismal crape or bombasine.
Methinks I hear the lord of nature say,
"Fools how you plague me! Go, be wise, be gay.
Mirth be your motto—merry be your heart;
Good laughs are pleasant inoffensive things."

PETER PINDAR.

INTRODUCTION.

ALTHOUGH the rambling Memoirs of this fortunate bookseller belong to a class which principally exhibit the importance of the writers to themselves, it is not without interest as a record of the progress of natural sagacity, industry, and frugality, to riches and independence Neither is the vanity of the author offensive or unamusing, exposing as it does the manner in which a naturally acute but uncultivated mind extends its stock of ideas, and deals with the new lights, both clear and will-o'-the-whisp*ish*, which it may be put into a situation to acquire. Some pleasant anecdotes also occasionally relieve the good-humoured egotism of the cheapest bookseller in the world; and his portraiture of methodism, so singularly qualified and retracted in his subsequent "Confessions," is at least very curious. Of the latter work, so far as it supplies biographical matter, a due use is made in the Sequel, and as the whole will be contained

in a single volume, this eccentric piece of self-delineation will not assume a bulk disproportionate to its merits. These, although humble, will not be found without their value by the genuine student of human nature. The operation of vague and desultory reading upon native, but altogether undisciplined shrewdness of intellect, was seldom better, because seldom more unconsciously displayed. To conclude, the Life of James Lackington, although a mere etching, has a something special about it, which entitles it to a place amidst a collection of autobiographical portraits, in which originality and variety, rather than high finish and precision, form the leading objects of attraction.

TRIPLE DEDICATION.

I. TO THE PUBLIC.

" In things indiff'rent reason bids us chuse,
" Whether the whim's a monkey or a muse."

CHURCHILL.

WORTHY PATRONS,

WERE I to address you in the accustomed declamatory strain which has long been adopted as the universal language of dedications, viz. flattery, I should not only merit your contempt, for thus endeavouring to impose upon your understandings, but also render myself ridiculously conspicuous, by a feeble attempt to perform that, for which, as well by nature as long established habit, I am totally disqualified.

On the other hand, I should esteem myself equally meriting your censure, as being guilty of a flagrant species of ingratitude, were I to omit availing myself of so favourable an opportunity as now presents itself of expressing the respect and veneration I entertain for you, resulting from the very extensive and ample encouragement with which you have crowned my indefatigable exertions to obtain your patronage, by largely contributing to the diffusion of science and rational entertainment, on such moderate terms as were heretofore unknown.

Permit me to indulge the pleasing hope, that when I assert my mind is deeply impressed with the most

grateful sense of the obligation, I shall be honoured with credit. If this opinion be well founded, to enlarge on the subject were superfluous—if otherwise, the strongest arguments the most splendid and forcible language could convey, would not ensure conviction; I therefore desist, fully persuaded that the most satisfactory demonstration I can possibly exhibit of the sincerity of this declaration, will be an inviolable adherence to that uniform line of conduct which has already secured your approbation to a degree eminent as unprecedented, and which is indeed daily rendered more evident, by a progressive increase in the number and extent of your commands; trusting, that so long as you find my practice invariably correspondent to those professions so frequently exhibited to your notice (from which to deviate would render me unworthy your protection) you will, in defiance of all malignant opposition, firmly persevere in the liberal support of him whose primary ambition it is, and during life shall be, to distinguish himself as,

Worthy patrons,

Your much obliged,

Ever grateful, and devoted humble servant,

JAMES LACKINGTON.

Chiswell street,
October 1791.

II. To that part of the numerous body of BOOKSELLERS of Great Britain and Ireland, whose conduct JUSTLY claims the additional title of RESPECTABLE;

Whose candour and liberality he has in numerous instances experienced, and feels a sensible pleasure in thus publicly acknowledging.

And lastly (though not least in *fame)*

III. To those sordid and malevolent BOOKSELLERS, whether they resplendent dwell in stately mansions, or in wretched huts of dark and grovelling obscurity;

—"I'll give every one a smart lash in my way."—

To whose assiduous and unwearied labours to injure his reputation with their brethren and the public, he is in a considerable degree indebted for the confidence reposed in him, and the success he has been honoured with, productive of his present prosperity,

THESE MEMOIRS

are, with all due discrimination of the respective merits of each,

Inscribed by

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

"To print or not to print?—this is the question:
Whether 'tis better in a trunk to bury
The quirks and crotchets of outrageous fancy,
Or send a well wrote copy to the press,
And, by disclosing, end them?——
* * * *
For who would bear th' impatient thirst of fame,
The pride of conscious merit, and 'bove all,
The tedious importunity of friends—
* * * *
To groan and sweat under a load of wit?
* * * *
'Tis critics that make cowards of us all." JAGO

CUSTOM, it has been repeatedly observed by many of my worthy (and some perhaps *unworthy*) predecessors in authorship, has rendered a preface almost indispensably necessary; while others again have as frequently remarked, that "custom is the law of fools." Those considerations induced me to hesitate whether I should usher my performance into the world with a preface, and thus hazard being classed with the adherents to that law, or by omitting it, escape the opprobrium, for "who shall decide when doctors disagree?" Now, though I would not take upon me to decide in every point in which doctors disagree, yet after giving the present subject that mature consideration which so important a concern required, I thought myself fully competent to decide, if not to general satisfaction, at least so as fully to satisfy one

particular person for whom I profess to have a very great regard, though perhaps few are to be found who would be equally condescending to him; who that person is I do not wish publicly to declare, as (being a very modest man) it might offend him; I shall only say, the more you read the Memoirs contained in the following pages, the better you will become acquainted with him. I ground my decision on these arguments; I concluded as most of my brethren of the quill do of their labours, that my performance possessed so much intrinsic merit as would occasion it to be universally admired by all good judges as a prodigious effort of human genius, and that this approbation must naturally excite the envy of some authors, who had not met with that high applause they deemed themselves entitled to, and incline them to search for imperfections in my work, and though I was persuaded of the impossibility of their finding any, yet being thus foiled, they might catch at the want of a preface, and construe *that* into an omission, so that in order to disarm them I resolved to have one; especially as those who deem prefaces unnecessary may, if they choose, decline reading it, whilst those on the other side of the question, if there was none, might be disappointed and have cause for complaint; but to be serious—if I can.

Almost every author, on producing the effusions of his pen (and his brain, if he has any) thinks it prudent to introduce himself by a kind of *prologue*, as it may be called, stating his reasons with due precision for intruding himself on his readers (whether true or otherwise is not always material to enquire,) bespeaking their candour towards his weaknesses and imperfections (which by the bye, few authors are so sensible of as their readers) and not unfrequently endeavouring to sooth those Goliahs in literature, ycleped *critics*, (with whom not many little Davids are found hardy enough to contend,) hoping thus to coax them into good-humour; or perhaps, if his vanity preponderates,

he throws the gauntlet of defiance with a view of terrifying them either to hold their peace or to do justice to those mighty abilities he is confident he possesses in a degree eminently superior to most of his brethren.

Among "true Parnassian bullies," De Scudery stands one of the foremost; he concludes his preface to the works of his friend Theophile, with these remarkable words, "I do not hesitate to declare that, amongst all the dead and all the living, there is no person who has anything to show that approaches the force of this vigorous genius; but if amongst the latter any one were so extravagant as to consider that I detract from his imaginary glory, to shew him that I fear as little as I esteem him, this is to inform him that my name is De Scudery." We have another remarkable instance in Claude Terllon, a poetical soldier, who begins his poems, by informing the critics, that "if any one attempts to censure him, he will only condescend to answer him sword in hand."

For my own part I disclaim these modes, convinced that in the first case every reader, whatever the author may plead, will judge for himself; and with regard to professed critics, were I so disposed, neither my natural or acquired abilities enable me to *bully* those who must be very ill qualified for their task, if they were thus to be intimidated from declaring their real sentiments; and, on the other hand, to affect a degree of humility, and by flattery to aim at warping their minds, is, in my opinion, paying them a very bad compliment.

"Critics, forgive the first essay
Of one whose thoughts are plain,
Whose heart is full, who never means
To steal your time again."

Never should I have ventured to appear in this habit before the public, had not the following motives urged me thereto:

17

Many of my acquaintances have frequently expressed a desire of obtaining from myself such particulars as they could rely on, of my passage through life.

I have even been repeatedly threatened, by some particular friends, that, if I declined drawing up a narrative, they were determined to do it for me. One of the first mentioned gentlemen prevailed on me (as the most likely mode to bring it to a period) to devote now and then a spare hour in minuting down some of the most material occurrences of my life, and to send them to him in an epistolary form, intending to digest the whole into a regular narrative for publication; that gentleman however on perusal was of opinion that it would be additionally acceptable to the curious part of the public, if exhibited to them in the plain and simple manner in which these letters were written, as thus tending to display such traits and features of a somewhat original character, and give a more perfect idea of "I, great I, the little hero of each tale," than any other mode that could have been adopted, especially as many *intelligent* persons were confident I could not write at all, while others *kindly* attributed to me what I never wrote.

"Then think
That he who thus is forc'd to speak,
Unless commanded, would have died in silence."

If among the multitude of memoirs under which the press has groaned, and with which it still continues to be tortured, the following sheets should afford some degree of entertainment, as a relaxation from more grave and solid studies, to an inquisitive and candid reader (those of an opposite description are not to be pleased with the ablest performance,) and he should deem it not the worst nor the most expensive among the numerous tribe, I shall esteem myself amply rewarded; had I however been disposed to be more attentive to entertainment and less to veracity, I might to many have rendered it much more agree-

able, though less satisfactory to myself; as I believe the observation long since made to be just, that few books are so ill written but that something may be gleaned from their perusal.

Should the insignificance of *my* Life induce any person better qualified to present the world with *his*, big with interesting events, my disposing of several large editions of that performance will afford me more *solid* satisfaction as a *bookseller* than any success or emolument which can possibly arise from this my first and most probably last essay as an author.

If unfortunately any of my kind readers should find the book so horrid dull and stupid that they cannot get through it, or if they do, and wish not to travel the same road again, I here declare my perfect readiness to supply them with abundance of books, much more witty, much more —— whatever they please. They never shall want books while L. is able to assist them; and whether they prefer one of his writing, or that of any other author, he protests he will not be in the smallest degree offended: let every author make the same declaration if he can.

Should my Memoirs be attended with no other benefit to society, they will at least tend to show what may be effected by a persevering habit of industry, and an upright conscientious demeanour in trade towards the public, and probably inspire some one, of perhaps superior abilities, with a laudable ambition to emerge from obscurity by a proper application of those talents with which providence has favoured him, to his own credit and emolument, as well as the benefit of the community. To such a one I ever have and ever shall wish every possible success, as it has uniformly been my opinion, that whatever is thus acquired is more honourable to the parties than the possession of wealth obtained without any intrinsic merit or exertion, and which is too frequently consumed with rapidity in the pursuit of vice and dissipation.

One word to my old friends the booksellers under number three of my dedication. This publication it is to be expected will tend to excite some degree of mirth in them. Conscious that I have often been the cause (however unintentional on my part) of exciting less pleasing sensations in them, I will readily allow them full scope; however, according to the well known adage, "let them laugh who win," I hope they will indulge me in the same propensity of laughing, if not *at* them, at least *with* them.

As a proof of my friendly disposition, I shall here add a piece of advice, which I do not hesitate to pronounce will, if attended to, entitle them to promotion in my first class of booksellers, and eventually prove more beneficial than a constant perseverance in the mode of conduct they have hitherto pursued, and those who have children will, I hope, see the propriety of inculcating the same doctrine to them for their future benefit; and as I flatter myself my advice will prove equally productive of benefit to great numbers of the community at large as to booksellers. It is this:—

If they observe any person by industry and application endeavouring to obtain an honest livelihood in that line for which his talents or disposition have qualified him, never to attempt, by dark inuendoes, sly hints, and false aspersions, to injure him; as, if he happens to be a man of becoming spirit, such conduct will only tend to increase his exertions and render him still more cautious to obtain a good character. In so doing their weapons will recoil on themselves, and they will have the mortification to see him flourish whilst they become objects of contempt in the eyes of the public, and will of course be avoided by them.

But I forget myself, from debating whether a preface was really necessary or not. If I proceed thus, I shall produce one as long as my book, as indeed some of my seniors in authorship have done before me, though not altogether consistent with propriety.

I will therefore conclude with a wish, that my readers may enjoy the feast with the same good humour with which I have prepared it. They will meet with some *solid* though not much *coarse* food, and the major part, I hope light and easy of digestion; those with keen appetites will partake of each dish while others, more delicate, may select such dishes as are more light and better adapted to their palates; they are all genuine British fare; but, lest they should be at a loss to know what the entertainment consists of, I beg leave to inform them that it contains forty-seven dishes of various sizes, which (if they calculate the expense of their *admission tickets)* they will find does not amount to two-pence per dish; and what I hope they will consider as *immensely* valuable (in compliance with the precedent set by Mr Farley, a gentleman eminent in the culinary science,) a striking likeness of their *Cook* into the bargain.

I have also prepared a bill of fare at the end of the volume. Ladies and gentlemen, pray be seated; you are heartily welcome, and much good may it do you.

PREFACE

TO THE

SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT EDITIONS.

" 'Tis nothing new, I'm sure you know,
For those who write, their works to show;
And if they're prais'd, and render'd vain,
'Tis ten to one they write again:
And then they read it o'er with care,
Correcting here, and adding there." MRS SAVAGE.

THE first edition of my Memoirs was no sooner published, than my old envious friends, mentioned in the third class of my dedication, found out that it was "d—d stuff! d—d low!" the production of a *cobler*, and only fit to amuse that honourable fraternity, or to line their garrets and stalls; and many gentlemen, who are my customers, have informed me that, when they ask for them at several shops, they received for an answer, that they had already too much waste paper, and would not increase it by keeping Lackington's Memoirs: and some kindly added, "You need not be in haste to purchase, as in the course of the Christmas holidays, Mr Birch in Cornhill will wrap up all his mince-pies with them, and distribute them through the town for the public good. Thus

"With all the eunuch's melancholy spite,
They growl at you, because they cannot write;
A gloomy silence, envy's pang imparts,
Or some cold hint betrays their canker'd hearts."

But the rapid sale of this Life soon caused them to alter their stories; and I was very much surprised to hear that several of those gentlemen, who had scarce done exclaiming, "Vile trash! beneath all criticism!" &c. began to praise the composition; and on looking into the English Review, I found that the editors had filled seven pages in reviewing these Memoirs, and had bestowed much praise on the author. I was then ready to conclude, that their generous and manly impartiality had, in a miraculous manner, effected the conversion of others. But I was soon convinced, that meanness can never be exchanged for generosity; and that those who had been "unclean were unclean still;" or, as Churchill says,

> "That envy, which was woven in the frame
> At first, will to the last remain the same.
> Reason may drown, may die, but envy's rage,
> Improves with time, and gathers strength from age."

It seems that several of those liberal-minded men, being prodigiously mortified at the increasing sale of my Life, applied to different authors in order to get one of them to father my book: but those authors, either from principle, or from knowing that my manuscript was kept in my shop for the inspection of the public, or from some other motive, refused to adopt the poor bantling: and not only so, but laughed at, and exposed the mean contrivance, to the very great disappointment of those *kind and honest-hearted friends of mine.*

> "'Tis hard to say, what mysteries of fate,
> What turns of fortune, on poor writers wait;
> The party slave will wound him as he can,
> And damn the merit, if he hates the man."
>
> W. Harte.

That I might not be justly charged with ingratitude, I take this opportunity of thanking my friends, customers, and the public, for their candid reception of my volume; the sale of which, and the encomiums I

have received on the subject, both by letter and otherwise, have far exceeded my most sanguine and self-flattering expectations; I very sensibly feel the obligation! Their generosity has overwhelmed me! I am overpaid, and remain their debtor!

"A truce with jesting; what I here impart
Is the warm overflowing of a grateful heart;
Come good, come bad, while life or mem'ry last,
My mind shall treasure up your favours past."

But, lest I should be over vain, I must at the same time declare, that I have received scurrilous abusive letters from several of Mr Wesley's people, merely because I have exposed their ridiculous principles and absurd practices; but more particularly for having pulled off the hypocritical veil from some of those sanctified deceivers which are among them.

The numerous letters of approbation which I have received from rational intelligent gentlemen, convince me that I have not wronged the cause of manly and rational Christianity, nor was it ever my intention so to do.

"But your philosophers will say,
Best things grow worse when they decay.
If Phœbus' ray too fiercely burn,
The richest wines to sourest turn. E. Lloyd.

I here also present my compliments and sincere thanks to my impartial friends, under the second class of my dedication, for the friendly disposition they have shown, in freely distributing my Memoirs among their customers, and they may be assured, that I will not let slip any opportunity of making them proper returns for all their favours.

I cannot conclude this preface without saying something about this edition.

When I put the first edition to the press, I really intended to print but a small number; so that when I was prevailed on, by some of my friends, to print a very large impression, I had not the least idea of ever

being able to sell the whole; and of course had not any intention of printing other editions. But the rapid sale of the work, and the many letters which I am continually receiving from gentlemen, in various parts of Great Britain and Ireland, who are pleased to honour me with their approbation and thanks, encouraged me to read the whole over with more attention, to correct such typographical errors as had escaped my observation, and to improve the language in numberless places; and yet many errors still remain.

In executing this plan, I perceived that I had omitted to introduce many things which would have been an improvement to the work; and while inserting them, others occurred to my memory, so that most parts of the work are now very much enlarged. But although these additions have increased the expenses of printing and paper to near double, yet I have added but sixpence to the price. Had profit been my motive, I could have divided the work into two volumes, and I may add that each volume would have been larger than even some *six shilling* ones lately published.

To such as ask why these additions had not been printed separately, to the end that such as purchased the first edition, might have had them without purchasing the whole work over again—I answer, had it been practical, I would have done that; but those additions being so many, and so various, rendered that method ridiculous, as every one who will take the trouble to compare the various editions, must readily acknowledge; nor can the purchasers of even the first edition complain with respect to the price, it being equal in size to most new publications which are sold at six shillings. And although some may think that the prefixed head is of no value, I can assure them, that I am of a very different opinion, *at least of the original;* and I have the pleasure to add, that a very great number of my customers have been

highly pleased to have so striking a likeness of their old bookseller. Nor am I the first bookseller who has published his head; Mr Nicolson, (commonly called Maps), bookseller at Cambridge, two years since, had his head finely engraven; it is a good likeness, and is sold at ten shillings and sixpence. Francis Kirkman, partner with Richard Hend (last century) prefixed his portrait to a book, entitled "The Witts, or Sport upon Sport," This Francis Kirkman also published Memoirs of his own Life, and probably led the way to John Dunton. See Grainger's Biographical History of England, vol. iv.

I could make many other apologies——

" ——— But why should I distrust
My judges are as merciful as just:
I know them well, have oft their friendship tried,
And their protection is my boast—my pride."

CUNNINGHAM.

VERSES

OCCASIONED BY READING

THE LIFE OF MR JAMES LACKINGTON.

ADDRESSED TO THE INGENIOUS AUTHOR

BY HIS UNKNOWN FRIEND.

SINCE your pen, friend unknown, such improvement conveys,
'Tis but justice to you that this tribute repays;
For when in the bosom mild gratitude burns,
'Tis a pleasing relief, which the feeling returns:
For as dear as the light to the thoughts of the blind,
Is the pen, or the voice, that enlightens the mind;
And the more, as from nature and genius untaught
Your various adventures and humour are brought,
Which display all the farce of the Methodist plan,
The shame of religion, of reason, and man;
While no libertine motives their secrets dispense,
But propriety joins hand-in-hand with good sense,
Oh! with thee, could the crowd view each sanctified scene,
Where the hypocrite oft wears simplicity's mien,
Where youth, second childhood, and weakness of sex,
Are objects they ever prefer to perplex;
Like thee, they'd contemn, or indignantly leave,
Whom folly and knav'ry combine to deceive;
And whose Newgate conversions blasphemously paint
The wretch most *deprav'd* the most *excellent* saint.
Go on; and discover each latent design,
And your rivals expose, who against learning combine
O'er such craft shall fair conduct, like thine, still prevail,
And an envied success lay them low in the scale.
But as time is too short all your steps to retrace,
Let your Life speak the rest, and succeed in their place:

VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE AUTHOR

How books mend the manners; and now so abound,
Where rudeness and ignorance lately were found.
But plain truth, for itself, it must still be confest,
Is the faithfulest advocate—therefore the best:
So I rise from the feast with a satisfied mind,
That the same every taste, and each temper, may find.
Still to drop all comparison, mental's the fare,
That needs only good taste to invite us to share;
Entertainment and knowledge, the objects in view;
Then receive, as the donor, the praise that is due.

C. H——S.

Bury St Edmund's.

THE LIFE

OF

JAMES LACKINGTON.

BOOKSELLER.

LETTER I.

"Others with wishful eyes on glory look,
When they have got their picture, toward a book,
Or pompous title, like a gaudy sign
Meant to betray dull sots to wretched wine.
If at his title L—— had dropt his quill,
L—— might have passed for a great genius still:
But L——, alas! (excuse him if you can)
Is now a scribbler, who was once a man."

YOUNG's Love of Fame.

DEAR FRIEND,

YOU have often requested me to devote what few leisure moments I could spare, in minuting down some of the principal occurrences of my life, with a view, sooner or later, of exhibiting the account to the public eye; who, as you were pleased to say, could not but be somewhat curious to learn some well authenticated particulars of a man, well known to have risen from an obscure origin to a degree of notice, and to a participation of the favour of the

public, in a particular line of business, I may without vanity say, hitherto unprecedented. This will appear more conspicuous, if you consider that I was not only poor, but laboured under every other disadvantage; being a stranger in London, and without friends, &c.

Ever willing to pay a becoming deference to the judgment of a person of your acknowledged merits, and whom I have the felicity of numbering among my firmest friends, yet being less anxious to appear as an adventurer among the numerous tribe of authors, than to continue a considerable vender of the produce of their labours, I have continually delayed complying with your kind wishes.—By the bye, does the publication of a catalogue of books entitle the compiler to the name of *author?* If it does, many booksellers have long had a claim to that distinction, by the annual publication of their catalogues, and myself, as author of a very voluminous one every six months. The reason for my asking this question is, I last year observed that a certain bookseller published his first catalogue with this introduction:—"As this is the first catalogue ever the *author* made, and is done in great haste, he hopes inaccuracies will be treated with lenity."

But to return from this digression. I should probably have still delayed compiling my narrative, if the editors of a certain periodical publication, who monthly labour to be witty, had not deemed me of sufficient consequence to introduce into their work what they are pleased to call a *portrait* of me! And though it was by them intended as a caricatura, yet I am persuaded that it will appear to those who best know me as a daubing more characteristic of the heavy brush of a manufacturer of signs, than the delicate pencil of a true portrait-painter; and on that account I should most certainly have considered it as unworthy notice, had they not daubed me with false features. This at once determined my wavering resolution, and I am now fully resolved to minute

down such particulars of my passage through life, as, though not adorned with an elegance of style, will, I assure you, possess what to you, I flatter myself, will be a greater recommendation, viz. a strict adherence to truth.

"To pomp or pathos I make no pretence,
But range in the broad path of common sense,
Nor ever burrow in the dark sublime."

And though no doubt you will meet with some occurrences in which you may find cause for censure, yet I hope others will present themselves which your candour will induce you to commend.

"Disdain not then these trifles to attend
Nor fear to blame, nor study to commend."

LORD HERVEY.

Should you be able to afford the whole a patient perusal, and think the account meriting the public eye, I shall cheerfully submit to your decision, convinced that you will not,

"With mean complacence e'er betray your trust,
Nor be so civil as to prove unjust."

John Dunton, a brother *bibliopole*, long since exhibited a whole volume of dulness, which he called his "Life and *Errors*." The latter term I believe might be a very proper appendage to the title-page of the innumerable lives which have been, and which will be published: for what man will dare to say of himself, his life has not been loaded with errors? That mine has been such I readily acknowledge; and should this narrative be published, many perhaps may deem that act another (possibly the greatest) error. To those I shall only observe, that "to err is human, to forgive divine."

As an additional stimulus, I can assure you as an absolute fact, that several gentlemen have at different periods (one very lately) intimated to me their intentions of engaging in the task, if I any longer declined it.

Of my first-mentioned *kind biographers* I shall take my leave, with a couplet, many years since written by an eminent poet, and not inapplicable to the present case.

"Let B—— charge low Grub street on my quill,
And write whate'er he please, except my *Will*."

And of you, for the present, after informing you my next shall contain a faithful account of particulars relative to the early part of my life, with assuring you that I am,

Dear friend, your ever obliged.

LETTER II.

"Why should my birth keep down my mounting spirit?
Are not all creatures subject unto time;
To time, who doth abuse the world,
And fills it full of hotch-podge bastardy?
There's legions now of beggars on the earth,
That their original did spring from kings;
And many monarchs now, whose fathers were
The riff-raff of their age; for time and fortune
Wears out a noble train to beggary;
And from the dunghill millions do advance
To state; and mark, in this admiring world
This is the course, which in the name of fate
Is seen as often as it whirls about;
The river Thames that by our door doth run,
His first beginning is but small and shallow,
Yet keeping on his course grows to a sea."

SHAKESPEAR'S Cromwell.

DEAR FRIEND,

IN my last I hinted that I should confine myself to a plain narrative of facts, unembellished with the meretricious aid of lofty figures, or representations of things which never had existence, but in the brain

of the author. I shall therefore not trouble you with a history of predictions which foretold the future greatness of your humble servant, nor with a minute account of the aspects of the planets at the very auspicious and important crisis when first I inhaled the air of this bustling orb.

"Whatever star did at my birth prevail,
Whether my fate was weigh'd in Libra' scale;
Or Scorpio reign'd, whose gloomy pow'r
Rules dreadful o'er the natal hour;
Or Capricorn with angry rays,
Those tyrants of the western skies."

HORACE.

For, extraordinary as it may appear, it has never yet occurred to me, that any of the adepts in the astrological science have made a calculation of my nativity: 'tis probable this high honour is by the planets destined to adorn the sublime lucubrations of the very ingenious Mr Sibley, in the next edition of his stup—endous work! And here, for the honour of the craft, let me remark, that this most sublime genius has, with myself, to boast (and who would not boast of their genealogy in having a prince for their ancestor?) in being a son of the renowned prince Crispin.

A volume has been written with the title of "The Honour of the Taylors; or the History of Sir John Hawkwood." But were any learned writer to undertake——the honour of the shoemakers, or the history of ——, how insignificant a figure would the poor taylors make, when compared with the honourable craft!

"Coblers from Crispin boast their public spirit,
And all are upright downright men of merit."

Should I live to see as many editions of my Memoirs published, as there have been of the Pilgrim's Progress, I may be induced to present the world with a folio on that important subject.

But to begin——

Were I inclined to pride myself in genealogical descent, I might here boast, that the family were originally settled at White Lackington, in Somersetshire, which obtained its name from one of my famous ancestors, and give you a long detail of their grandeur, &c., but, having as little leisure as inclination to boast of what, if true, would add nothing to *my* merits, I shall for the present only say, that I was born at Wellington in Somersetshire, on the 31st of August, (old style) 1746. My father, George Lackington, was a journeyman shoemaker, who had incurred the displeasure of my grandfather for marrying my mother, whose maiden name was Joan Trott. She was the daughter of a poor weaver in Wellington; a good honest man, whose end was remarkable, though not very fortunate: in the road between Taunton and Wellington, he was found drowned in a ditch, where the water scarcely covered his face: he was, 'tis conjectured,

"———— Drunk when he died."

This happened some years before the marriage of my father and mother.

My grandfather, George Lackington, had been a gentleman-farmer at Langford, a village two miles from Wellington, and acquired a pretty considerable property. But my father's mother dying when my father was but about thirteen years of age, my grandfather, who had two daughters, bound my father apprentice to a Mr Hordly, a master-shoemaker in Wellington, with an intention of setting him up in that business at the expiration of his time. But my father worked a year or two as a journeyman, and then displeased his father by marrying a woman without a shilling, of a mean family, and who supported herself by spinning of wool into yarn, so that my mother was delivered of your friend and humble servant, her first-born, and hope of the family, in my grandmother Trott's poor cottage; and that good old

woman carried me privately to church, unknown to my father, who was (nominally) a Quaker, that being the religion of his ancestors.

About the year 1750, my father having three or four children, and my mother proving an excellent wife, my grandfather's resentment had nearly subsided, so that he supplied him with money to open a shop for *himself*. But that which was intended to be of very great service to him and his family, eventually proved extremely unfortunate to himself and them; for, as soon as he found he was more at ease in his circumstances, he contracted a fatal habit of drinking, and of course his business was neglected; so that after several fruitless attempts of my grandfather to keep him in trade, he was, partly by a very large family, but more by his habitual drunkenness, reduced to his old state of a journeyman shoemaker. Yet so infatuated was he with the love of liquor, that the endearing ties of husband and father could not restrain him: by which baneful habit himself and family were involved in the extremest poverty.

"To mortal men great loads allotted be;
But of all packs, no pack like poverty."

HERRICK.

So that neither myself, my brothers, or sisters, are indebted to a father scarcely for anything that can endear his memory, or cause us to reflect on him with pleasure.

"Children, the blind effects of love and chance,
Bear from their birth the impression of a slave."

DRYDEN.

My father and mother might have said with Middleton,

"How adverse runs the destiny of some creatures
Some only can get riches and no children;
We only can get children and no riches;
Then 'tis the prudent part to check our will,
And, till our state rise, make our blood stand still."

But to our mother we are indebted for everything. "She was a woman, take her for all in all, I shall not look on her like again." Never did I know or hear of a woman who worked and lived so hard as she did to support eleven children: and were I to relate the particulars, it would not gain credit. I shall only observe that, for many years together, she worked nineteen or twenty hours out of every twenty-four; even when very near her time, sometimes at one hour she was seen walking backwards and forwards by her spinning-wheel, and her midwife sent for the next. Whenever she was asked to drink a half-pint of ale, at any shop where she had been laying out a trifling sum, she always asked leave to take it home to her husband, who was always so mean and selfish as to drink it.

Out of love to her family she totally abstained from every kind of liquor, water excepted; her food was chiefly broth, (little better than water and oatmeal,) turnips, potatoes, cabbage, carrots, &c; her children fared something better, but not much, as you may well suppose. When I reflect on the astonishing hardships and sufferings of so worthy a woman, and her helpless infants, I find myself ready to curse the husband and father that could thus involve them in such a deplorable scene of misery and distress. It is dreadful to add, that his habitual drunkenness shortened his days nearly one half, and that about twenty years since he died, unregretted by his own children; nay more, while nature shed tears over his grave, reason was thankful:

"A parting tear to nature must be paid,
Nature, in spite of us, will be obey'd."

Thankful that the cause of their poverty and misery was taken out of the way,

"The pious tear the sons and daughters shed;
Thus they, whom long he wrong'd, bewail'd him dead
With rev'rence they perform his obsequies,
And bear their sorrows as beseems the wise." COOKE.

Read this, ye inhuman parents, and shudder! Was a law made to banish all such fathers, would it not be a just, nay even a mild law? I have my doubts whether children should not be taught to despise and detest an unnatural brutal parent, as much as they are to love and revere a good one.

Here, sir, permit me to drop so gloomy a subject, and relate an uncommon circumstance that happened about this time.

Mr James Knowland, who for many years kept the sign of the Eight Bells in Wellington, had a son that appeared weakly and infirm; when he was about nine years old, he was taken very ill, and (to all appearance) died; he had lain in the coffin five days, when, in bringing him down stairs in order to bury him, they thought that something moved in the coffin, and on opening it, they found him alive, and his eyes open. About two years after this, the boy was again taken ill, and in a day or two after, was to all appearance dead; but his father resolved not to have him interred until he became offensive; he lay in this state six days, and again came to life.

I am, sir, yours.

LETTER III.

"So have I wander'd ere those days were past,
That childhood calls her own. Ah, happy days,
That recollection loves, unstain'd with vice,
Why are ye gone so soon?"——

VILLAGE CURATE.

DEAR FRIEND,

As I was the eldest, and my father for the first few years a careful hard-working man, I fared something better than my brothers and sisters. I was put for

two or three years to a day-school, kept by an old woman; and well remember how proud I used to be to see several ancient dames lift up their hands and eyes with astonishment, while I repeated by memory several chapters out of the New Testament, concluding me, from this specimen, to be a prodigy of science. But my career of learning was soon at an end, when my mother became so poor that she could not afford the mighty sum of two-pence per week for my schooling. Besides, I was obliged to supply the place of a nurse to several of my brothers and sisters. The consequence of which was, that what little I had learned was presently forgot; instead of learning to read, &c. it very early became my chief delight to excel in all kinds of boyish mischiefs; and I soon arrived to be the captain and leader of all the boys in the neighbourhood.

"The sprightliest of the sprightly throng,
The foremost of the train." MISS BOWDLER.

So that if any old woman's lanthorn was kicked out of her hand, or drawn up a sign post, or if anything was fastened to her tail, or if her door was nailed up, I was sure to be accused as the author, whether I really were so or not.

But one of my tricks had nearly proved fatal to me. I had observed that *yawning* was infectious; and with a determination to have some sport, I collected several boys together one market-day evening, and instructed them to go amongst the butchers; whither I accompanied them. We placed ourselves at proper distances, and, at a signal given, all began to yawn as wide as we could; which immediately had the desired effect, the whole butcher-row was set a yawning; on which I and my companions burst into a hearty laugh, and took to our heels. The trick pleased us so well that, two or three weeks after, we attempted to renew it. But one of the butchers, who was half drunk, perceiving our intention,

snatched up his cleaver and threw it at me, which knocked off my hat without doing me any harm.

I was about ten years of age, when a man began to cry apple-pies about the streets: I took great notice of his methods of selling his pies, and thought I could do it much better than he. I communicated to a neighbouring baker my thoughts on the subject in such a manner as gave him a very good opinion of my abilities for a pie-merchant, and he prevailed on my father to let me live with him. My manner of crying pies, and my activity in selling them, soon made me the favourite of all such as purchased half-penny apple-pies and halfpenny plum-puddings, so that in a few weeks the old pie-merchant shut up his shop. You see, friend, that I soon began to "make a noise in the world." I lived with this baker about twelve or fifteen months, in which time I sold such large quantities of pies, puddings, cakes, &c. that he often declared to his friends in my hearing, that I had been the means of extricating him from the embarrassing circumstances in which he was known to be involved prior to my entering his service.

During the time I continued with this baker, many complaints were repeatedly made against me for the childish follies I had been guilty of, such as throwing snow-balls, frightening people by flinging serpents and crackers into their houses, &c. I also happened one day to overturn my master's son, a child about four years old, whom I had been driving in a wheel-barrow. Dreading the consequences, I immediately flew from my master's house, and (it being evening) went to a glazier's house and procured a parcel of broken glass; I also provided myself with a pocket-ful of peas; and thus equipped, made fine diversion for myself and my unlucky companions, by going to a number of houses, one after another, discharging a handful of peas at the windows, and throwing down another handful of glass in the street at the same instant, which made such a noise as very much

frightened many people, who had no doubt of their windows being broken into a thousand pieces. This adventure, together with throwing the child out of the wheelbarrow, produced such a clamour against me amongst the old women, that I would not return to my master, and not knowing what else to do, I went home to my father, who, you may easily conceive, could not afford to keep me idle, so I was soon set down by his side to learn his own trade; and I continued with him several years, working when he worked, and while he was keeping *Saint Monday*, I was with boys of my own age, fighting, cudgel playing, wrestling, &c. &c.

The following story has been variously stated; my father assured me that the origin of it was as follows:

He and some other young fellows being one Easter Sunday morning at the clerk's house at Langford, near Wellington, drinking the clerk's ale, they overheard the old man reading the verses of the psalms that he was to read that morning at church; and in order to have some fun with the old clerk, one of the company set off early to church, and on the word 'tree' they stuck on the word 'horse,' so that when the old man came to that place, he read as follows, "And they shall flourish like a young bay horse." "Horse! it should not be horse; but, by the Lord, it is horse!"

The above old man was called Red Cock for many years before his death, for having one Sunday slept in church, and dreaming that he was at a cock-fighting, he bawled out, "A shilling upon the red cock." And behold the family are called Red Cock unto this day.

The preceding reminds me of an odd circumstance that happened but a few years since at W———. As the good doctor was one Sunday morning going through the street towards the cathedral, he heard a woman cry "Mackerel, all alive, alive O!" And on his arrival at the church, he began the service as follows, "When the wicked man turneth away from

his wickedness and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive, alive O!" These last words the doctor proclaimed aloud, in the true tone of the fish-woman, to the great surprise of the congregation; but the good doctor was so studious and absent, that he knew not what he had done.

Yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

" Who gather round, and wonder at the tale
Of horrid apparition, tall and ghastly,
That walks at dead of night, or takes his stand,
O'er some new-open'd grave: and (strange to tell!)
Evanishes at crowing of the cock." BLAIR'S Grave.

DEAR FRIEND,

I must not forget an odd adventure that happened when I was about twelve years of age, as it tends to show in part my dauntless disposition, which discovered itself on many occasions in the very early part of my life.

I had one day walked with my father to Holywell lake, a village two miles from Wellington, where meeting with some good ale, he could not find in his heart to part from it until late at night. When we were returning home by the way of Rockwell Green, (commonly called Rogue Green, from a gang of robbers and house-breakers who formerly lived there,) having just past the bridge, we were met by several men and women, who appeared to be very much frightened, being in great agitation. They informed us that they were returning back to Rogue Green, in order to sleep there that night, having been prevented from going home to Wellington by a dreadful apparition which they had all seen in the hollow way,

about a quarter of a mile distant; adding, that a person having been murdered there formerly, the ghost had walked ever since; that they had never before paid much attention to the well-known report; but now they were obliged to credit it, having had ocular demonstration.

" Aided by fancy, terror lifts his head,
And leaves the dreary mansions of the dead;
In shapes more various mocks at human care,
Than e'er the fabled Proteus us'd to wear;
Now, in the lonely way each trav'ller's dread,
He stalks a giant shape without a head;
Now in the haunted house, his dread domain,
The curtain draws, and shakes the clinking chain;
Hence fabled ghosts arise, and spectres dire,
Theme of each ev'ning tale by winter's fire."

PRALL'S SUPERSTITION.

My father had drank too large a quantity of ale to be much afraid of anything, and I (who could not let slip such an opportunity of shewing my courage) seconded matters for the poor terrified people to return with us; and as I offered to lead the van, they were prevailed on to make the attempt once more; but said, that it was rather presumptuous, and hoped that no dreadful consequence would ensue, as all the company, they trusted, were honest hearted, and intended no harm to any person: they moreover added, that " God certainly was above the devil." I then advanced, and kept before the company about fifty yards,

" Whistling aloud to bear my courage up."

But when we had walked about a quarter of a mile, I saw at some distance before us in the hedge, the dreadful apparition that had so terrified our company. Here it is! (said I). " Lord have mercy upon us!" replied some of the company, making a full stop; and would have gone back, but shame prevented them. I still kept my distance before, and called out

to them to follow me, assuring them that I was determined to see what it was. They then fell one behind another, and advanced in single files. As I proceeded I too was seized with a timid apprehension, but durst not own it; still keeping on before, although I perceived my hair heave my hat from my head, and my teeth to chatter in my mouth. In fact, I was greatly agitated at what I saw; the object much resembled the human figure as to shape, but the size was prodigious. However, I had promised to see what it was, and for that purpose I obstinately ventured on about thirty yards from the place where I first had sight of it. I then perceived that it was only a very short tree, whose limbs had been newly cut off, the doing of which had made it much resemble a giant. I then called to the company, and informed them, with a hearty laugh, that they had been frightened at the stump of a tree.

This story caused excellent diversion for a long time afterwards in Wellington, and I was mentioned as a hero.

The pleasure and satisfaction I received from the discovery, and the honour I acquired for the courage I possessed in making it, has, I believe, had much influence on me ever since; as I cannot recollect that in any one instance I have ever observed the least fear of apparitions, spirits, &c. since.

> " What education did at first receive,
> Our ripen'd age confirms us to believe."
>
> POMFRET.

Not that I have always steadily disbelieved what has been related of such appearances, a few accounts of which seem so well authenticated, as at least to make me doubt whether there might not exist in the scale of beings some of a more aerial substance than mankind, who may possess both the inclination and the power of assuming our shape, and may perhaps take as much delight in teazing the human species, as too

many of our species do in teazing and even tormenting those of the brute creation.

" Some astral forms I must invoke by pray'r;
Fram'd all of purest atoms of the air:
In airy chariots they together ride,
And sip the dew, as thro' the clouds they glide;
Vain spirits, you, that shunning heav'n's high noon,
Swarm here beneath the concave of the moon,
Hence to the task assign'd you here below!
Upon the ocean make loud tempests blow:
Into the wombs of hollow clouds repair,
And crash out thunder from the bladder'd air;
From pointed sun-beams take the mist they drew;
And scatter them again in pearly dew;
And of the bigger drops they drain below,
Some mould in hail, and others sift in snow."

DRYDEN.

While I am on this subject, I cannot resist the temptation of relating a truly ridiculous affair that happened about this time at Taunton.

In the workhouse belonging to the parish of St James, there lived a young woman who was an idiot. This poor creature had a great aversion to sleeping in a bed, and at bed-time would often run away to a field in the neighbourhood called the Priory, where she slept in the cow-sheds.

In order to break her of this bad custom, two men agreed to try if they could not frighten her out of it. And one night, when they knew that she was there, they took a white sheet with them, and coming to the place, one of the men concealed himself to see the event, while the other wrapped himself up in the sheet, and walked backwards and forwards close before the cow-shed in which she was laid. It was sometime before Molly paid any attention to the apparition; but at last up she got. "A-ha! (said she) a white devil!" and by her manner of expressing herself she thought it was very strange to see a *white* devil. And soon after she exclaimed, "A black

devil too! a black devil too!" With that the man who had the sheet on, looked over his shoulder, and saw (or imagined he saw) a person all over black behind him; the sight of which made him take to his heels. Molly then clapped her hands as fast as she could, crying out at the same time, "Run, black devil, and catch white devil! Run, black devil, and catch white devil!" and was highly diverted. But this proved a serious adventure to the white devil, as he expired within a few minutes after he had reached his own house; and from that time poor Molly was left alone to sleep in peace.

About ten years after the above affair, at Wivelscombe, nine miles from Taunton, a gentleman farmer's house was alarmed every night between twelve and one o'clock. The chamber doors were thrown open, the bed-clothes pulled off the beds, and the kitchen furniture thrown with violence about the kitchen, to the great terror of the family, insomuch that the servants gave their master and mistress warning to leave their places, and some of them actually quitted their service. This dreadful affair had lasted about six weeks, when a young gentleman who was there on a visit, being in bed one night, at the usual hour he heard his chamber door thrown open, and a very odd noise about his room. He was at first frightened, but the noise continuing a long time, he became calm, and lay still, revolving in his mind what he had best do. When on a sudden he heard the spirit creep under his bed, which was immediately lifted up, &c. This convinced him that there was some substance in the spirit; on which he leaped out of bed, secured the door, and with his oaken staff belaboured the ghost under the bed as hard as he could, until he heard a female voice implor-ing mercy. On that he opened his chamber door, and called aloud for a light. The family all got up as fast as possible, and came to his room. He then informed them that he had got the spirit under the

bed; on hearing which most of them were terribly frightened, and would have run off faster than they came, but he assured them they had nothing to fear: then out he dragged the half-murdered spirit from its scene of action. But how great was their surprise and shame, when they discovered that this tormenting devil was no other than one of their servant girls, about sixteen years of age, who had been confined to her bed several months by illness.

This ghost was no sooner laid, than two others alarmed the neighbourhood, one of which for a long time shook a house every night and terribly distressed the family; at length they all resolved one night to go over the whole house in a body and see what it was that agitated the building. They examined every room but in vain, as no cause could be discovered, so they very seriously as well as unanimously concluded that it must be the devil.

But, about a fortnight after this, one of the family being out late in the garden saw a great boy get in at the window of an old house next door (part of which was in ruins,) and soon after the house began to shake as usual, on which the family went out of their own habitation and entered the old house where the boy was seen to get in; yet for a long time they could not discover any person, and were just turning to come out again, when one of the company observed the boy suspended over their heads striding over the end of a large beam that ran across both houses.

It was then apparent that the violent agitation of the adjoining house was occasioned by nothing more than his leaping up and down on the unsupported end of this beam.

Another apparition had for a long time stolen many geese, turkeys, &c. and although it had been seen by many, yet nobody would venture to go near it, until at length one person a little wiser than the rest of his neighbours, seeing the famous apparition all over white stealing his fowls, was determined to be fully

satisfied what kind of spirit it could be that had so great a predilection for poultry. He accordingly went round the yard, and as the apparition was coming over the wall he knocked it down. This terrible ghost then proved to be a neighbouring woman who had put on her shroud in order to deter any persons that should by chance see her, from coming near her. Thus, though she had for a long time successfully practised this ingenious way of procuring poultry, the old fox was caught at last.

This is so prolific a subject that I could fill many pages with relations of dreadful spectres, which for a while have reigned with tyrannic sway over weak minds, and at length, when calm reason was suffered to assume its power, have been discovered to be no more objects of terror than those I have here noticed. But doubtless many such instances must have occurred to you.

> " Chief o'er the sex he rules with tyrant sway,
> When vapours seize them, or vain fears betray;
> With groans of distant friends affrights the ear,
> Or sits a phantom in the vacant chair;
> Fancy, like Macbeth, has murder'd sleep."
>
> PRALL.

It has indeed often astonished me that, in this enlightened age, there should yet remain numbers, not in the country only, but even in the metropolis, who suffer themselves to be made miserable by vain fears of preternatural occurrences, which generally owe their origin to the knavery of some ill-disposed person who has a sinister purpose to answer thereby, or to the foolish desire of alarming the minds of weak people; a practice sometimes (though intended as *fun*) productive of very serious consequences. Now and then indeed these terrors are owing to accidental and ridiculous causes. As an instance, I shall give you the account of a terrible alarm which some years since took place in a hospital of this city, as related

to me by a gentleman who at the time resided in the house for the purpose of completing his medical education, and on whose veracity I can confidently rely.

For several nights successively a noise had been heard in the lower part of the building, like the continual tapping against a window, which led the night nurses wisely to conclude, it must certainly be occasioned by the spirit of one of the bodies deposited in the dead-house endeavouring to escape; as the sound seemed to proceed from that particular quarter. The dread of these sagacious ladies at last became such as totally to prevent their going from ward to ward to do their duty, and determined my friend to attempt to lay this perturbed spirit; which however he apprehended would more speedily, as well as effectually, be performed by the assistance of a good cudgel, than by exorcisms: he therefore, instead of consulting the chaplain, gave orders the next night that as soon as the usual dreadful sound was heard, to give him notice. This you may suppose they did not neglect doing, though at the same time they were shocked at his temerity, and apprehensive for the consequences. Impressed with an idea of the alarm being occasioned by some servant or patient in the house, he immediately sallied forth with a candle in one hand, and a good tough twig in the other, accompanied by two of the men servants of the hospital, accoutred in the same manner, resolved that, if detected, the party should meet with an ample reward. The dead-house was passed; the noise continued; though it evidently proceeded from a window at some distance in the area. When the cavalcade came near the scene of action, the window suddenly and violently broke without anything being seen. This my friend confessed, for a moment occasioned his making a halt; but, as nothing visible had escaped through the area, it occurred to him something might have made an entrance that way, accordingly he proceeded to the internal part of the building, and on opening, the door

the apparition immediately not only appeared, but disappeared, and that so instantaneously as not to afford time to apply the remedy intended. And what think you was this dreadful spirit? That you may exercise your ingenuity at guessing, I will here conclude with,

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER V.

"———Were thy education ne'er so mean,
Having thy limbs, a thousand fair courses
Offer themselves to thy election."

BEN JONSON's Every Man in his Humour.

"Laugh if you are wise." MARTIAL.

DEAR FRIEND,

A CAT.—An odd beginning of a letter, by the bye—but here highly important and proper, as tending to relieve you from the anxious thoughts which no doubt must have filled your mind on the subject of the concluding part of my former letter. I must give you a laughable instance or two more, which lately happened. Mr Higley the bookseller, famous for selling odd volumes, or broken sets of books, lived next door to a public-house in Russell court, Drury lane; this public-house was separated from his habitation only by a slight wainscot partition, through which Mr Higley caused a hole to be cut, and a slider put over it, so that when he wanted any beer he always drew back the slider, and had it handed to him through this convenient aperture.

The night after Mr Higley's death, which happened a few months since, the man who was left to take care of the corpse, about twelve o'clock, hearing the

landlord and his family going up stairs to their beds, on a sudden drew back the slider and hallowed through the hole, "Bring me a pint of beer." This order the landlord and his family heard and were terribly alarmed, as they really thought it had proceeded from the ghost of their neighbour Higley; the poor maid let fall the warming-pan, which came tumbling down the stairs, the landlady being within the reach of her husband's legs, caught fast hold of them, which in his fright he mistook for poor Higley. But the man bursting into a hearty laugh restored the spirits of our host and his family.

About the year 1781, six or seven mechanics having been drinking near the whole of the day at a public house in the Borough, they at night were at a loss how to procure more liquor, their money being all gone, when two of the company observed, that an old wire-drawer in the room was dead drunk, they proposed to put him into a sack, and to carry him to Longbottom, the resurrection-man. This motion met with the approbation of the whole, and the two that proposed it took him away to Longbottom's house, as a dead subject, and requested a guinea, saying that they would call for the remainder in the morning. Their request was complied with, and the old wire-drawer was left in the sack in a room amongst dead bodies. About midnight the old man awaked, and made a terrible noise which much alarmed Mr Longbottom and his wife, as they really supposed that one of their dead subjects was come to life again; they dared not approach the room but remained for a long time under a dreadful apprehension of what might be the consequences. The old fellow after a long struggle got out of the sack, and after tumbling about awhile over the dead bodies, he at last found his way down stairs, and off he set, leaving Mr Longbottom and his wife in the utmost consternation. The old wire-drawer related this story to my brother, Philip Lackington.

Having now, I dare say, had enough of ghostesses, I will proceed with my narration.

During the time that I lived with the baker, my name became so celebrated for selling a large number of pies, puddings, &c. that for several years following, application was made to my father, for him to permit me to sell almanacks a few market days before and after Christmas. In this employ I took great delight, the country people being highly pleased with me, and purchasing a great number of my almanacks, which excited envy in the itinerant venders of Moore, Wing, Poor Robin, &c. to such a degree, that my father often expressed his anxiety lest they should some way or other do me a mischief. But I had not the least concern, for possessing a light pair of heels, I always kept at a proper distance.

O, my friend, little did I imagine at that time, that I should ever excite the same poor mean spirit in many of the booksellers of London and other places! But,

> " Envy at last crawls forth, from hell's dire throng,
> Of all the direfull'st! Her black locks hung long,
> Attir'd with curling serpents; her pale skin
> Was almost dropp'd from her sharp bones within,
> And at her breast stuck vipers, which did prey
> Upon her panting heart both night and day,
> Sucking black blood from thence: which to repair,
> Both day and night they left fresh poisons there.
> Her garments were deep-stain'd with human gore,
> And torn by her own hands, in which she bore
> A knotted whip and bowl, which to the brim,
> Did green gall, and the juice of wormwood swim;
> With which when she was drunk, she furious grew,
> And lash'd herself; thus from th' accursed crew
> Envy, the worst of fiends, herself presents,
> Envy, good only when she herself torments."
>
> COWLEY.

" ——— The true condition of Envy is,
Dolor alienæ felicitatis; to have

Our eyes continually fix'd upon another
Man's prosperity, that is, his chief happiness,
And to grieve at that."

I was fourteen years and a half old when I went with my father to work at Taunton, seven miles from Wellington. We had been there about a fortnight, when my father informed our master, George Bowden, that he would return to Wellington again. Mr Bowden was then pleased to inform my father that he had taken a liking to me, and proposed taking me apprentice, I seconded Mr Bowden's motion (having a better prospect in continuing with Mr Bowden than in returning to Wellington with my father,) as he offered to take me without any premium, and to find me in everything. My father accepted his offer, and I was immediately bound apprentice for seven years to Mr George and Mrs Mary Bowden, as honest and worthy a couple as ever carried on a trade.

" Religious, punctual, frugal, and so forth;
Their word would pass for more than they were worth.'
POPE.

They carefully attended to their shop six days in the week, and on the seventh went with their family twice to an Anabaptist meeting; where little attention was paid to speculative doctrines, but where sound morality was constantly inculcated.

" For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

But in this, as in many other places of worship, it was performed in a dull spiritless manner, so that the excellent morality taught there was not so much attended to as it would have been had it been enforced, or re-enforced by the captivating powers of oratory.

I well remember, that although I constantly attended this place, it was a year or two before I took the least notice of the sermon which was read; nor had I any idea that I had the least concern in what

the minister was (as it is called) preaching about For,

"Who a cold, dull, lifeless drawling keeps,
One half his audience laughs, whilst t'other sleeps.
* * * *
Sermons, like plays, some please us at the ear,
But never will a serious reading bear;
Some in the closet edify enough,
That from the pulpit seem'd but sorry stuff.
'Tis thus there are who by ill reading spoil
Young's pointed sense, or Atterbury's style!
While others, by the force of eloquence,
Make that seem fine, which scarce is common sense.
But some will preach without the least pretence
To virtue, learning, art, or eloquence.
Why not? you cry: they plainly see, no doubt—
A priest may grow right reverend without."

ART OF PREACHING.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER VI.

"Youth is the stock whence grafted superstition
Shoots with unbounded vigour."

MILLER'S Mahomet.

"——All must lament that he's under such banners,
As evil community spoils our good manners."

SIMKIN.

DEAR FRIEND,

AT the time that I was bound apprentice, my master had two sons, the eldest about seventeen years old, the youngest fourteen. The eldest had just been baptized, and in troducedas a member of the Arianistical dipping community where my master and his family attended. The boy was a very sober indus-

trious youth, and gave his father and mother much pleasure. The youngest was also a good lad. Thus everything continued well for some time after I had been added to the family. Both of the boys had very good natural parts, and had learned to read, write, keep accounts, &c. But they had been at schools where no variety of books had been introduced, so that all they had read was the bible. My master's whole library consisted of a school-size bible, Watts's Psalms and Hymns, Foot's Tract on Baptism, Culpepper's Herbal, the History of the Gentle Craft, an old imperfect volume of Receipts in Physic, Surgery, &c., and the Ready Reckoner. The ideas of the family were as circumscribed as their library. My master called attention to business and working hard, "minding the main chance." On Sundays all went to meeting; my master on that day said a short grace before dinner, and the boys read a few chapters in the bible, took a walk for an hour or two, then read a chapter or two more.

"What right, what true, what fit we justly call,
And this was all our care—for this is all."

They then supped, and went early to bed, perfectly satisfied with having done their duty; and each having a quiet conscience soon fell into the arms of "nature's soft nurse, sweet sleep."

"And thus whatever be our station,
Our hearts in spite of us declare;
We feel peculiar consolation,
And taste of happiness a share."

HORACE IMITATED.

I cannot here omit mentioning a very singular custom of my master's: every morning, at all seasons of the year, and in all weathers, he rose about three o'clock, took a walk by the river side round Frenchware-field, stopped at an alehouse that was early open, to drink half a pint of ale, came back before six

o'clock, then called up his people to work, and went to bed again about seven.

Thus was the good man's family jogging easily and quietly on, no one doubting but he should go to heaven when he died, and every one hoping it would be a good while first.

"A man should be religious, not superstitious."

But, alas! the dreadful crisis was at hand that put an end to the happiness and peace of this little family. I had been an apprentice about twelve or fifteen months, when my master's eldest son George happened to go and hear a sermon by one of Mr Wesley's preachers, and who had left the plough-tail to preach the *pure* and *unadulterated* Gospel of Christ. By this sermon the fallow ground of poor George's heart was ploughed up, he was now persuaded that the innocent and good life he had led would only sink him deeper into hell; in short, he found out that he had never been converted, and of course was in a state of damnation without benefit of clergy. But he did not long continue in this damnable state, but soon became one of

"————————The sanctified band,
Who all holy mysteries well understand."

SIMKIN.

He persuaded himself that he had passed through the *new birth*, and was quite sure that his name was registered in the Book of Life, and (to the great grief of his parents) he was in reality become a *new creature*.

"'Twas methodistic grace that made him toss and tumble,
Which in his entrails did like jalap rumble."

OVID's Epist. Burlesqued.

George had no sooner made things sure for himself, than he began to extend his concern to his father, mother, brother, and me; and very kindly gave us to understand that he was sure we were in a very deplorable state, "without hope, and without

God in the world," being under the curse of the Law.

"For all enthusiasts, when the fit is strong,
Indulge a volubility of tongue." FENTON.

In the long winter nights, as we sat at work together, he proved (in his way) that every man had original sin enough to damn a thousand souls; and a deal was said on that subject. A passage was quoted from the wise determination of the doctors of the Sorbonne, where they say that children inclosed in their mother's womb are liable to damnation if they die there unbaptized. Quotations were also made from some *deep* author who had asserted, that there were "infants in hell but a span long;" and that "hell was paved with infant sculls," &c.

"Thus feigning to adore, make thee,
A tyrant God of cruelty!
As if thy right hand did contain
Only a universe of pain,
Hell and damnation in thy left,
Of ev'ry gracious gift bereft,
Hence reigning floods of grief and woes,
On those that never were thy foes,
Ordaining torments."

As to morality, George assured us it was of no avail; that as for good works they were only splendid sins; and that in the best good work that any creature could perform, there was sin enough to sink the doer to the nethermost hell; that it was *faith* alone that did everything, without a grain of morality; but that no man could have one particle of this mysterious faith before he was justified; and justification was a sudden operation on the soul, by which the most execrable wretch that ever lived might instantaneously be assured of all his sins being pardoned; that his body from that very moment became the living temple of the Holy Ghost; that he had fellowship with

the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and, that Spirit was to be their constant and infallible guide:

"Whate'er men speak by this new light,
Still they were sure to be i' the right.
This dark lanthorn of the Spirit,
Which none see by but those that bear it;
A light that falls down from on high,
For spiritual trades to cozen by;
An ignis fatuus, that bewitches
And leads men into pools and ditches,
This light inspires and plays upon
The nose of Saint, like bagpipe drone,
And speaks through hollow empty soul,
As through a trunk, or whispering hole,
Such language as no mortal ear
But spiritu'l eaves-droppers can hear." BUTLER.

My master very seldom heard any of these conversations, but my good mistress would sit down for hours together with her bible in her lap, from which she would read such scriptures as proved the necessity of living a good life, performing good works, &c.; she also did her best to confute the tenets of original sin, imputed righteousness, doctrine of the Trinity, &c. &c. Unfortunately the good woman had no great talents for controversy; however, George had a very tenacious memory, and employed all his thoughts on these subjects, so that John his younger brother, and I also (two competent judges no doubt) thought that he had the best of the arguments on these edifying subjects. "Nothing," says Montaigne, "is so firmly believed as that which we least know;" for which reason Plato said, "that it was more easy to satisfy his hearers, with discourses about the nature of the gods than of men." About five months after George's conversion, John went to hear those only true ambassadors from heaven,

"Who stroll and teach from town to town
The good old cause: which some believe
To be the devil that tempted Eve

With knowledge, and do still invite
The world to mischief with new light."

BUTLER.

These devil-dodgers happened to be so very powerful (that is, very noisy) that they soon sent John home crying out, he should be damn'd! he should be damn'd for ever!

But John soon got out of the damnable state, and assured us that all his sins were forgiven, merely by believing that he had passed from death into life, and had union and communion with God. He now became as merry as before he had been sorrowful, and sang in Mr Wesley's strain,

"Not a doubt shall arise
To darken the skies,
Nor hide for a moment my God from my eyes."

John sang to me, and said to me a deal in this wonderful strain, of which I did not comprehend one syllable.

"——— His words were loose
As heaps of sand, and scatter'd wide from sense.
So high he mounted in his airy throne,
That when the wind had got into his head,
It turn'd his brains to frenzy."

But these extraordinary accounts and discourses, together with the controversies between the mother and the sons, made me think they knew many matters of which I was totally ignorant. This created in me a desire for knowledge, that I might know who was right and who was wrong. But to my great mortification, I could not read. I knew most of the letters, and a few easy words, and I set about learning with all my might. My mistress would sometimes instruct me, and having three-halfpence per week allowed me by my mother, this money I gave to John (my master's youngest son) and for every three-halfpence he taught me to spell one hour. This was

done in the dark, as we were not allowed a candle after we were sent up stairs to bed.

I soon made a little progress in reading; in the mean time I also went to the Methodist meeting There, as "enthusiasm is the child of melancholy," I caught the infection. The first that I heard was one Thomas Bryant, known in Taunton by the name of the Damnation Preacher (he had just left off cobbling soles of another kind.) His sermon frightened me most terribly. I soon after went to hear an old Scotchman, and he assured his congregation that they would be damned, and double damned, and treble damned, and damned for ever, if they died without what he called *faith*.

"Conj'rers like, on fire and brimstone dwell,
And draw each moving argument from hell."
SOAME JENYNS.

This marvellous doctrine and noisy rant and enthusiasm soon worked on my passions, and made me believe myself to be really in the damnable condition that they represented; and in this miserable state I continued for about a month, being all that time unable to work myself up to the proper key.

At last, by singing and repeating enthusiastic amorous hymns, and ignorantly applying particular texts of scripture, I got my imagination to the proper pitch, and thus was I born again in an instant, became a very great favourite of heaven,

"And with my new invented patent eyes,
Saw heav'n and all the angels in the skies."
PETER PINDAR.

I had angels to attend all my steps, and was as familiar with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as any old woman in Mr Wesley's connection; which, by the bye, is saying a great deal.

I am, dear sir, yours

LETTER VII.

"No sleep, no peace, no rest
Their wand'ring and afflicted minds possess'd
Upon their souls and eyes
Hell and eternal horror lies,
Unusual shapes and images,
Dark pictures and resemblances
Of things to come, and of the worlds below,
O'er their distemper'd fancies go:
Sometimes they curse, sometimes they pray unto
The gods above, the gods beneath;
No sleep, but waking now was sister unto death."

BISHOP SPRAT.

DEAR FRIEND,

IT is perhaps worth remarking, that what the Methodists call conviction of sin, being awakened, &c. is often a most dreadful state, and has the very same effect on such as have lived a very innocent life as it has upon the most notorious offenders; this conviction (as they call it) is brought about by the preachers heaping all the curses in the bible on the heads of the most virtuous as well as most vicious; for, say they, he who keepeth the whole law and offendeth but in one point, is as much in a state of damnation, as he that hath broken every one of the commandments, or committed robbery, murder, &c. so that they pour out every awful denunciation found in the bible, and many not found there, against all who have not the methodistical faith. This they call shaking the people over the mouth of hell, and they in reality believe

"That cruel God, who form'd us in his wrath,
To plague, oppress, and torture us to death,
Who takes delight to see us in despair,
And is more happy, the more curs'd we are,
In vain all nature smiles, but man alone,
He's form'd more perfect and was made to groan."

YOUNG OFFICER'S TRIFLES.

Thus are many who before possessed "consciences void of offence towards God and mankind" tricked out of their peace of mind, by the ignorant application of texts of scripture. Their fears being once so dreadfully alarmed, they often become insupportable to themselves and all around them; many in this state have put a period to their existence, others run mad, &c.

> Oh! would mankind but make great truths their guide,
> And force the helm from prejudice and pride;
> Were once these maxims fix'd, that God's our friend,
> Virtue our good, and happiness our end;
> How soon must reason o'er the world prevail,
> And error, fraud, and superstition fail!
> None would hereafter then with groundless fear,
> Describe th' Almighty cruel and severe."
>
> SOAME JENYNS's Epistle to Hon. P. York.

If the above terror of conscience was only to take place in knaves and rascals, there would be no reason for blaming the Methodists on that head; "the wretch deserves the hell he feels." A terrible instance of this kind happened near London bridge about two years since; a person in a lucrative branch of business had put unbounded confidence in his head shopman, and well rewarded him for his supposed faithfulness. One morning, this man not coming down stairs so soon as usual, the servant maid went up to call him, and found him hanging up to the bed-post: she had the presence of mind to cut him down, but he being nearly dead, it was some days before he perfectly recovered.

On his master coming to town, he was informed of what had happened to his favourite shopman; he heard the relation with the utmost astonishment, and took great pains to discover the cause of so fatal a resolution, but to no purpose. However, he endeavoured to reconcile this unhappy man to life, was very tender towards him, and gave him more encouragement than ever; but the more the master did to

encourage and make him happy, the more the poor wretch appeared to be dejected; in this unhappy state of mind he lived about six months, when one morning not appearing at his usual time, the servant maid went to see if he was well, and found him very weak in bed; a day or two after, his master came to town, and being told of his situation, went up to see him, and finding him in bed, and apparently very ill, proposed sending for a physician, but the poor devil refused to take anything, and rejected every assistance, saying his time was nearly come. Soon after this the servant informed her master that he would not have the bed made, and that she had just observed some blood on one corner of the sheet. The master then went up stairs again, and by lifting up the bed-clothes found that he had stabbed himself in several places and that in this state he had lain three or four days.

"When innocence and peace are gone,
How sad, how teazable to live!" SECUNDUS.

On the surgeon's appearance, he refused to have the wounds inspected, and the surgeon being of opinion that it was too late to render him any kind of service, they let him lie still. The master soon after this pressed him much to know the mysterious cause of so much misery, and so unnatural an end. The dying wretch exclaimed, "a wounded conscience, who can bear." The master then endeavoured to comfort him, and assured him that his conscience ought not to wound him. "I know you (continued he) to be a good man, and the best of servants." "Hold! hold!" exclaimed the wretch, "your words are daggers to my soul! I am a villain, I have robbed you of hundreds, and have long suffered the tortures of the damned for being thus a concealed villain; every act of kindness shewn to me by you has been long like vultures tearing my vitals. Go, sir, leave me, the sight of you causes me to suffer excruciating tortures; he then shrunk under the bed-clothes, and the same night

expired in a state of mind unhappy beyond all description.

" Hope gone! the guilty never rest!
Dismay is always near;
There is a midnight in the breast,
No morn can ever cheer." NIGHT SCENES.

Terrible as the above relation is, I assure you that I have not heightened it: when an ungrateful villain is punished by his own reflections, we acknowledge it to be but just. In Morton's History of Apparitions are several shocking stories of persons, who, by their abandoned practices, have brought on themselves all the horrors of a guilty conscience.

" O treacherous conscience; while she seems to sleep
On rose and myrtle, lull'd with syren song;
While she seems nodding o'er her charge to drop
On headlong appetite the slacken'd rein,
And gives up to licence unrecall'd,
Unmarked; see from behind her secret stand,
The sly informer minutes every fault,
And her dread diary with horror fills.
A watchful foe! the formidable spy,
List'ning, o'erhears the whispers of our camp:
Our drawing purposes of heart explores,
And steals our embryos of iniquity.
As all-rapacious usurers conceal
Their doomsday book from all-consuming heirs,
Thus with indulgence most severe she treats,
Writes down our whole history, which death shall read,
In every pale delinquent's private ear."
NIGHT THOUGHTS.

But the case is otherwise amongst the Methodists; they work on the fears of the most virtuous; youth and innocence fall victims daily before their threats of hell and damnation, and the poor feeble-minded, instead of being comforted and encouraged, are often by them sunk into an irrecoverable state of gloomy despondency and horrible despair.

It is true that many of their hearers are not only

methodistically convinced, or alarmed, but are also *hocus-pocusly* converted, for as some of their preachers employ all their art and rhetoric to alarm and terrify, so others of them use their utmost skill to give them assurance of their sins being pardoned; which reminds us of the law-suit, where one party sued for a forged debt, and the other produced a forged receipt But with thousands that is not the case, even with those who join their society, where so much of divine love, assurance, and extasies are talked of, where enthusiastic, rapturous, intoxicating hymns are sung; and besides the unhappy mortals in their own community, thousands there are who have lost their peace of mind by occasionally hearing their sermons.

And even those among them who have arrived to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, and who at times talk of their foretaste of heaven, and of their full assurance of sins forgiven, and of talking to the Deity as familiarly as they will to one another; (all which, and much more, I have heard a thousand times) yet even those very pretended favourites of heaven are (if we believe themselves) miserable for the greatest part of their time, having doubts, fears, horrors of mind, &c. continually haunting them wherever they are. "The superstitious man (says Cicero) is miserable in every scene, in every incident of life; even sleep itself, which banishes all other cares of unhappy mortals, affords to him matter of new terror, while he examines his dreams, and finds in those visions of the night, prognostication of future calamities." Between twenty and thirty years since, some thousands of them in London took it into their heads that the world would be at an end on such a night, and for some days previous to this fatal night, nothing was attended to but fasting and praying, and when it came, they made a watch-night of it, and spent it in prayer, &c. expecting every moment to be the last; and it is remarkable, that thousands who were not Methodists gave credit to this

ridiculous prophecy, and were terribly alarmed; but the next morning they were ashamed to look at one another, and many durst not appear in their shops for sometime afterwards. But others of them said that God had heard the prayers of the righteous, and so spared the world a little longer. Some years after that, Mr Wesley alarmed his people all over England with the tale of a comet; great numbers were dreadfully apprehensive lest this comet should scorch the earth to a cinder; but the saints by prayer made the comet keep a proper distance.

Charnock, of the last century, in his discourse on Providence, has proved (in his way) that the universe was created and is kept agoing for the sake of the elect, and that as soon as their number is complete, the whole will be destroyed. This is genuine Calvinism.

The fanatics in every age have found their account in making their followers believe the end of the world was at hand. In some of the wills and deeds by which estates have been given to monasteries, &c. in France, they have expressed their belief of the world's being nearly at an end, as a reason for making such liberal donations to the church. But it is happy for us that in England such wills would be set aside. A case of this nature occurred while lord Northington was at the head of the law department. Reilly the preacher had wheedled, or frightened, an old woman (Mrs Norton) out of a deed of gift of fifty pounds per year, but after the old woman's panic and fear of damnation were over, she had recourse to chancery, and his lordship annulled the deed of gift. His lordship's remarks on such kinds of impositions are very curious, and worth your reading. See Collectanea Juridica, vol. i. p. 458.

In fact, the very best of the Methodists are like children, elated or depressed by mere trifles; and many who joined them while young and ignorant,

quit their society as they attain to years of discretion, or as their judgment is better informed.

"Love or anger, ambition or avarice (says a great man) have their root in the temper and affections, which the soundest reason is scarce able fully to correct; but superstition, being founded on false opinion, must immediately vanish, when true philosophy has inspired juster sentiments of superior powers."

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER VIII.

"Religion's lustre is by native innocence
Divinely fair, pure, and simple from all arts;
You daub and dress her like a common mistress,
The harlot of your fancies; and by adding
False beauties, which she wants not, make the world
Suspect her angel face is foul within."

ROWE's Tamerlane.

"Be careful to destroy the book of James.
Substantial virtues that vile papist claims;
Forgetting Paul, he spurns at faith alone,
And bids our saintship by our lives be known:
All Cato's virtue was not worth a pin,
And Phocion's exit but a shining sin."

DEAR FRIEND,

THE enthusiastic notions which I had imbibed, and the desire I had to be talking about religious mysteries, &c. answered one valuable purpose; as it caused me to embrace every opportunity to learn to read, so that I could soon read the easy parts of the bible, Mr Wesley's hymns, &c. and every leisure minute was so employed.

In the winter I was obliged to attend my work

from six in the morning until ten at night. In the summer half year I only worked as long as we could see without candle; but notwithstanding the close attention I was obliged to pay to my trade, yet for a long time I read ten chapters in the bible every day: I also read and learned many hymns, and as soon as I could procure some of Mr Wesley's tracts, sermons, &c. I read them also; many of them I perused in Cloacina's temple, (the place where my lord Chesterfield advised his son to read the classics; but I did not apply them, after reading, to the farther use that his lordship hints at).

I had such good eyes, that I often read by the light of the moon, as my master would never permit me to take a candle into my room, and that prohibition I looked upon as a kind of persecution, but I always comforted myself with the thoughts of my being a dear child of God; and as such, that it was impossible for me to escape persecution from the children of the devil, which epithets I very *piously* applied to my good master and mistress. And so ignorantly and imprudently zealous (being a real Methodist) was I for the good of their precious souls, as sometimes to give them broad hints of it, and of the dangerous state they were in. Their pious good old minister, the reverend Mr Harrison, I called "a blind leader of the blind;" and I more than once assured my mistress, that both he and his whole flock were in a state of damnation; being without the assurance of their sins being pardoned, they must be "strangers to the hope of Israel, and without God in the world." My good mistress wisely thought that a good stick was the best way of arguing with such an ignorant infatuated boy as I was, and had often recourse to it; but I took care to give her a deal of trouble; for whenever I was ordered in my turn to read the bible, I always selected such chapters as I thought militated against Arians, Socinians, &c. and such verses as I deemed favourable to the doctrine of original sin, justification

by faith, imputed righteousness, the doctrine of the trinity, &c. On such parts I always placed a particular emphasis, which puzzled and teazed the old lady a good deal.

Among other places I thought (having so been taught by the Methodists) that the sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel very much favoured the doctrines of original sin, imputed righteousness, &c.; that chapter I often selected and read to her, and she has often read the eighteenth chapter of the same prophecy, for the sake of the parable of the father's eating sour grapes.

Whenever I read in St Paul's epistles on justification by faith alone, my good mistress would read in the epistle of St James, such passages as say that a man is not justified by faith alone, but by faith and works, which often embarrassed me not a little. However, I comforted myself with the conceit of having more texts of scripture on my side of the question than she had on her side. As to St James, I was almost ready to conclude, that he was not quite orthodox, and so at last I did not much mind what he said.

"—— False opinions rooted in the mind,
Hoodwink the soul and keep our reason blind.
In controverted points can reason sway,
When passion or conceit hurries us away?"

Hitherto I had not frequented the Methodist meetings by the consent or knowledge of my master and mistress; nor had my zeal been so great as to make me openly violate their commands. But as my zeal increased much faster than my knowledge, I soon disregarded their orders, and without hesitation ran away to hear a methodistical sermon as often as I could find an opportunity. One Sunday morning at eight o'clock my mistress seeing her sons set off, and knowing that they were gone to a Methodist meeting, determined to prevent me from doing the same by locking the door, which she accordingly did; on which,

in a superstitious mood, I opened the bible for direction what to do, (ignorant Methodists often practise the same superstitious method,) and the first words I read were these, "He has given his angels charge concerning thee, lest at any time thou shouldest dash thy foot against a stone." This was enough for me; so without a moment's hesitation, I ran up two pair of stairs to my own room, and out of the window I leaped, to the great terror of my poor mistress. I got up immediately, and ran about two or three hundred yards towards the meeting house; but alas! I could run no farther, my feet and ancles were most intolerably bruised, so that I was obliged to be carried back and put to bed; and it was more than a month before I recovered the use of my limbs. I was ignorant enough to think that the Lord had not used me very well, and resolved not to put so much trust in him for the future.

This my rash adventure made a great noise in the town, and was talked of many miles round. Some few admired my amazing strength of faith, but the major part pitied me, as a poor ignorant deluded and infatuated boy.

"The neighbours star'd and sigh'd, yet blessed the lad,
Some deem'd him wondrous wise, some believed him mad."

DR BEATTIE.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER IX.

" One makes the rugged paths so smooth and even
None but an ill-bred man can miss of heaven.
Another quits his stockings, breeches, shirt,
Because he fancies virtue dwells in dirt:
While all concur to take away the stress
From weightier points, and lay it on the less."
STILLINGFLEET on Conversation.

" 'Gad, I've a thriving traffic in my eye.
Near the mad mansions of Moorfields I'll bawl;
Friends, fathers, mothers, sisters, sons and all,
Shut up your shops, and listen to my call!" FOOTE.

DEAR FRIEND,

IN the fourth year of my apprenticeship my master died. Now although he was a good husband, a good father, and a good master, &c., yet, as he had not the methodistical faith, and could not pronounce the Shibboleth of that sect, I *piously* feared that he was gone to hell.

My mistress thought that his death was hastened by his uneasy reflections on the bad behaviour of his sons, after they commenced Methodists; as before they were *converted* each was dutiful and attended to his trade, but after they became saints they attended so much to their spiritual concerns that they acted as though they supposed they were to be fed and clothed by miracles, like Mr Huntingdon, who informs in his book called " The Bank of Faith," that the Lord sent him a pair of breeches, that a dog brought him mutton to eat, fish died at night in a pond on purpose to be eaten by him in the morning; money, and in short everything he could desire, he obtained by prayer. Mr Wesley used to cure a violent pain in his head the same way, as he relates in his journals. Thus, as Foote says,

" With labour, toil, all second means dispence,
And live a rent-charge upon Providence."

To give you a better idea of methodistical ignorance and neglect of ordinary means of living, &c. I will relate one instance more. Mary Hubbard (an old woman of Mr Wesley's society) would often wash her linen, hang it out to dry, and go away to work in the fields, or to Taunton market, four miles from her house; and when blamed, she would answer, "That the Lord watched over her, and all that she had, and that he would prevent any person from stealing her two old smocks, or if he permitted them to be stolen, he would send her two new in their stead." And I seriously assure you, sir, that there are many thousand Mary Hubbards amongst the Methodists.

As I had been bound to my mistress as well as my master, I was of course an apprentice still. But after my master's death I obtained more liberty of conscience, (as I called it,) so that I not only went to hear the Methodist sermons, but was also admitted into their society; and I believe they never had a more devout enthusiastical member; for several years I regularly attended every sermon and all their private meetings.

" I, like a hackney-coachman, knew
Short way to heav'n by a clew,
Could cut across, and save the road
That guided to the blest abode."

As you are probably unacquainted with the nature of these private meetings, a short account of them may perhaps afford you some amusement.

Mr Wesley instituted amongst his people, besides the public preachings, several kinds of private meetngs; and as the prayer-meeting is the least private of any of them, I will first take notice of that.

To the prayer-meetings, which were in general held in private houses, they often invited people who were

not of their society. A hymn was first sung, then they all knelt, and the first person who felt a motion made an extemporary prayer; when he had done, another began, and so on, for about two hours.

"There every soul a face of sorrow wears,
And not one sign of happiness appears;
But looks of terror and dejected eyes,
Despairing murmurs, and heart-rending sighs!
No eye doth wander, and no lip doth smile,
But holy horrors chill us all the while."

YOUNG OFFICER.

It so happened sometimes, that one of the brethren began to pray without having *the gift* of prayer, (as they call it,) and then he often stuck fast, like some of the young orators at Coachmaker's Hall, &c. Prayer-meetings were held in such high esteem amongst them, that they asserted, more were "born again," and more "made free from all the remains of sin," or in other words of their own, "made perfect as God is perfect," in these kinds of meeting, than at public preaching, &c. Thus, as Pomfret says,

"The spirits heated will strange things produce."

But it is impossible for you, my friend, to form any just idea of these assemblies, except you had been present at them: one wheedles and coaxes the Divine Being in his addresses; another is amorous and luscious; and a third so rude and commanding, he will even tell the Deity that he must be *a liar* if he does not grant all they ask. In this manner will they work up one another's imaginations until they may actually be said to be in a state of intoxication, and whilst in this intoxicated state, it often happens that some of them recollect a text of scripture, such as, "thy sins are forgiven thee," or "go and sin no more," &c., and then they declare themselves to be born again, or to be sanctified, &c.

They have another kind of private meeting after the public preaching on Sunday evenings, in which

the preacher meets all the members of the society who stay behind after the general congregation is dismissed. To this society the preacher gave such advice as he deemed better suited to a godly few than to a promiscuous multitude of "*outward-court* worshippers."

Their *Love-feast* is also a private meeting of as many members of the community as please to attend: and they generally come from all parts, within several miles of the place where love-feasts are held.

When all are met they alternately sing and pray; and such amongst them as think that their *experience* (as they call it) is remarkable, stand up in their place and relate all the transactions between God, the devil, and their souls.

> "Discussing evils, which begin
> In every soul that tastes of sin!
> As head of chosen doth foreknow,
> How far the devil means to go."
>
> PIOUS INCENDIARY.

At such seasons as this, I have heard many of them declare that they had just received the pardon of all their sins while brother such-a-one was in prayer; another would then get up and assert that he was just at that instant made perfectly free from sin.

At these times the Spirit is supposed to be very powerfully at work amongst them; and such an unison of sighing and groaning succeeds, that you would think they had all lost their senses. In this frantic state, many apply to themselves such texts of scripture as happen to come into their heads.

In the love-feasts they have buns to eat, which are mutually broken between each brother and sister, and they have also water to drink, which they hand from one to another. These meetings begin about seven o'clock, and last till nine or ten.

In London, Bristol, and other large places, they have some private meetings, unknown to the com-

munity at large. These meetings consist of all married men at one time, young and unmarried men at another time: the married women by themselves, and the single women by themselves: and to each of these classes Mr Wesley went, and gave such advice or exhortations as he thought suitable to their situation in life, seldom failing to speak much in praise of celibacy to the maids and bachelors under his pastoral care. I will in my next give you an account of their watch-nights, class-meetings, bands, and other particulars.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER X.

" ——————— Here Gamaliel sage
Trains up his babes of grace, instructed well
In all the ——— discipline of prayer;
To point the holy leer: by just degrees
To close the twinkling eye; expand the palms,
To expose the whites, and with the sightless balls
To glare upon the crowd: to rise, to sink
The docile voice, now murm'ring soft and slow,
With inward accent calm, and then again,
In foaming floods of rapt'rous eloquence
Let loose the storm, and thunder through the nose
The threatened vengeance."

SOMERVILLE.

DEAR FRIEND,

THE *watch-night* begins about seven o'clock. They sing hymns, pray, preach, sing, and pray again; then exhort, sing and pray alternately, until twelve o'clock. The hymns which they sing on those nights are written for such occasions, and abound with gloomy ideas, which are increased by the time of night; and it must be remarked, that the major part of those

who attend these nocturnal meetings, having fasted the whole of the day, (according to Mr Wesley's orders,) are in a very proper state of mind to entertain the most extravagant whims or enthusiastic notions that can possibly enter the heads of any visionaries. So that such nights are often very prolific, as numbers are said to be born again, and become the temples of the Holy Ghost on watch-nights, which makes those nights esteemed by them.

Mr Wesley, in every place where his people were numerous, had divided them into classes, consisting of twelve or fourteen brothers or sisters. Sometimes men and women met together in the same class (as they called it), and other classes consisted of all men or all women. Each of these classes had one in it who was called the leader. In such classes where men and women met together, the leader was always a brother; and so of course when the class consisted of men alone. But in the women's classes a sister was always the leader.

When they met together, the leader first gave out a hymn, which they all sang; after the hymn they all knelt, and their leader made an extempore prayer; after which they were seated, and when the leader had informed them of the state of his own mind, he enquired of all present, one after another, how they found the state of their souls. Some he found were full of faith and *assurance*, others had dreadful doubts and fears; some had horrid temptations.

> "It doth affect my inward man,
> To think of Satan's wicked plan;
> Ah, me! how doth that fiend conspire,
> To drag each saint to lasting fire!"
>
> FANATICISM DISPLAYED.

Others complained of a lukewarm state, &c. In these meetings some of the members spoke of themselves as though they were as pure as angels are in heaven; but with the generality of them it was far

otherwise; and nothing was more common among them than to hear the major part exclaiming against themselves, and declaring that they were the most vile abandoned wretches on this side hell, that they wondered why the earth did not open and swallow them up alive. But they generally added, that "the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin," and that "where sin abounded there would grace much more abound." Indeed it was easy to remark, that the reason why they painted themselves in such odious colours, was only to boast of an astonishing quantity of grace that God had bestowed on them, in thus pardoning all their abominations, and numbering them with the household of faith who ought to have been shut up in the nethermost hell. The greater the sinner (say they) the greater the saint. To each of these the leader gave a word of comfort, or of correction, in the best manner he was able. They then sang and prayed again. This lasted about one hour. And every one in Mr Wesley's connection did or was expected to meet, each in his own class once in a week. In these classes each made a weekly contribution towards the general support of the preachers, &c. Such as were very poor contributed a penny per week, others two-pence, and some who could afford it six-pence. This money was entered in a book kept for that purpose, and one in every class, called the steward, had the care of the cash.

I now come to speak of the bands, which consisted only of justified persons; that is, such as had received the assurance of their sins being pardoned. In the classes, both the awakened (as they call them) and the justified, and even those that were made perfect, met all together, as did the married and the single, and often men and women. But none were admitted into any band but such as were at least in a justified state, and the married of each sex met by themselves, and the single by themselves. About ten was the number generally put in one band; all these must belong to

and meet in some class once a week, when not hindered by sickness, &c., and they were also to meet weekly in their band. When met, they first sang, then made a short prayer; that done, the band-leader informed them of the state of his mind during the last week, &c. He then made inquiry into the state of all present, and each related what had passed since they last met; as what visitations they had received from God, what temptations from the devil, the flesh, &c. And it is a maxim amongst them that exposing to one another what the devil has particularly tempted them to commit, will make the old fellow more careful how he tempts, when he knows that all his secrets will be told the next meeting. This they call shaming the devil. In the classes they only confessed in general terms, that they have been tempted by the world, the flesh, and the devil. But in the bands they confessed the particular sins which they had been tempted to commit, or had actually committed.

The last time I met in band was in London, where an old man (near seventy years of age) informed us that he had for several weeks together laboured under a very grievous temptation of the devil, who all this time had been constantly tempting him to commit adultery; he farther informed us, that having let too much of his house to lodgers, they were obliged to put the maid's bed in the room where he and his wife slept; and that one morning he had seen the maid lying asleep, nearly or quite uncovered, and he again assured us, that ever since that time the devil had been tempting him to do that which was naught with the maid. I could not help thinking that the old gentleman was right in charging it on the devil, as there was little reason to think it was any temptation of the flesh. Permit me to add, that this old buck had a wife about half his own age. I have been informed, that some young men of the brotherhood have at times disguised themselves in women's clothes, and have so got into the women's bands; it may be very

curious to hear the confessions of the holy sisters. By this time I suppose you have had enough of band-meetings.

Mr Wesley instituted another kind of private meeting for the highest order of his people, called the select bands; to which none were admitted but such as were sanctified, or made perfect in love, and freed from all the remains of sin. But as I never professed perfection, I was not permitted to enter into this holy of holies. But I have known a great number of these perfect saints, of both sexes; and I also lived in the same house a whole year with one of these entire holy sisters. A few days before I came to live in Chiswell street, one of these perfect sisters was detected in stealing coals out of the shed of one of the sanctified brothers; but she, like the old fellow above mentioned, said it was the devil that tempted her to do it.

Four times every year new tickets are distributed to all Mr Wesley's people throughout the three kingdoms. Their ticket is a very small slip of paper, with a text of scripture on it, which is exchanged every quarter for some other text. Such as are only in a class, have a different text from such as are in a band, so that no one can be admitted into a general meeting of the bands, appointed by any of the preachers when he intends to give them an exhortation, nor into any particular band, by a common society ticket. On the common tickets are such texts as these: "Now is the accepted time."—"Awake thou that sleepest," and such like. But those for the bands are in a higher strain; as, "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."—"Go on unto perfection."—"Ye are children of the light."—"Your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost;" and other texts of a similar tendency. For these tickets each poor person paid one shilling, such as were rich paid more; indeed the money seemed the principal end of issuing tickets, at least in country places, the members in the community being

so well known to each other, that they scarcely ever showed their tickets in order to gain admittance. I forgot to inform you that prayer-meetings, class-meetings, band-meetings, &c., were in general held in private houses, belonging to some of the brethren.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XI.

"Stiff in opinion, always in the wrong;
Was everything by starts and nothing long."

* * * * * *

"Then all for women, panting, rhiming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking."

DEAR FRIEND,

YOU now see what sort of a society I was got into. In country places particularly, they consist of farmers, husbandmen, shoemakers, woolcombers, weavers, their wives, &c. I have heard Mr Wesley remark that more women are converted than men; and I believe that by far the greatest part of his people are females; and not a few of them sour, disappointed old maids, with some others of a less prudish disposition,—

"Who, grown unfit for carnal bliss,
Long to taste how spirits kiss."

Lavater in his essay on Physiognomy says, "Women sink into the most incurable melancholy, as they also rise to the most enraptured heights." In another place he says, "By the irritability of their nerves, their incapability for deep inquiry and firm decision, they may easily, from their extreme sensi-

bility, become the most irreclaimable, the most rapturous enthusiasts."

"There is," says Mr Hume, "only one subject on which I am apt to distrust the judgment of females: and that is, concerning books of gallantry and devotion, which they commonly affect as high-flown as possible; and most of them seem more delighted with the warmth than with the justness of the passion. I mention gallantry and devotion as the same subject; because, in reality, they become the same when treated in this manner; and we may observe, that they both depend on the very same complexion; as the fair sex have a great share of the tender and amorous disposition, it perverts their judgment on this occasion, and makes them be easily affected, even in what has no propriety in the expressions, nor nature in the sentiment. Mr Addison's elegant discourses of religion have no relish with them, in comparison to books of mystic devotion: and Otway's fine tragedies are rejected for the rant of Mr Dryden."

There are thousands in this society who will never read anything besides the bible, and books published by Mr Wesley. For several years I read very little else, nor would I go (at least very seldom) to any other place of worship; so that instead of hearing the sensible and learned preachers of Taunton, I would often go four, five, or six miles, to some country village, to hear an inspired husbandman, shoemaker, blacksmith, or woolcomber; and frequently in frost and snow have I risen a little after midnight (not knowing what time of night it was) and have wandered about the town until five o'clock, when the preaching began; where I have often heard a sermon preached to not more than ten or a dozen people. But such of us as did attend at this early hour, used afterwards to congratulate each other on the great privilege we enjoyed; then off we went to our work shivering with cold.

I was first converted to Methodism when I was

about sixteen years of age; from that time until I was twenty-one I was a sincere enthusiast, and every spare hour I enjoyed I dedicated to the study of the bible, reading methodistical books, learning hymns, hearing sermons, meeting in societies, &c. My memory was very tenacious, so that everything I read I made my own. I could have repeated several volumes of hymns; when I heard a sermon, I could have preached it again, and nearly in the same words; my bible had hundreds of leaves folded down, and thousands of marks against such texts as I thought favoured the doctrines (or whims) which I had imbibed. So that I stood forth as the champion of Methodism wherever I came.

But alas! my godly strict life at length suffered interruption. I will give you a farther account of the Methodists when I come to the time when I finally left their society.

The election for two members of parliament was strongly contested at Taunton just as I attained my twenty-first year; and being now of age, the six or seven months which I had to serve of my apprenticeship were purchased of my mistress by some friends of two of the contending candidates; so that I was at once set free in the midst of a scene of riot and dissipation.

"Present example gets within our guard,
And acts with double force, by few repell'd."

YOUNG.

"Nor shame nor honour could prevail,
To keep me thus from turning tail."

As I had a vote, and was also possessed of a few ideas above those of my rank and situation, my company was courted by some who were in a much higher sphere; and (probably what they partly intended) in such company I soon forgot my godly or methodistical connections, and ran into the opposite extremes so that for several months most of my spare hour; were devoted to the

" Young-ey'd god of wine! parent of joys!
Frolic and full of thee, while the cold sons
Of temperance, the fools of thought and care,
Lay stretch'd in sober slumbers."

MALLET's Eurydice.

Here I had nearly sunk for ever into meanness, obscurity, and vice; for when the election was over, I had no longer open houses to eat and drink in at free cost; and having refused bribes, I was nearly out of cash.

I began the world with an unsuspecting heart, and was tricked out of about three pounds (every shilling I was possessed of) and part of my clothes, by some country sharpers. Having one coat and two waistcoats left, I lent my best waistcoat to an acquaintance, who left the town and forgot to return it.

However, I did not sink quite so low as the commonalty of journeymen shoemakers, but in general worked very hard, and spent my money in better company.

" To know good, preferring specious ill,
Reason becomes a cully to the will;
Thus man, perversely fond to roam astray,
Hoodwinks the guide assigned to shew the way;
And in life's voyage, like the pilot fares,
Who breaks the compass, and contemns the stars."

FENTON.

Notwithstanding, at times I was very uneasy, and although I had not been at any methodistical meeting during the time that I had lived this dissipated life, yet my mind was not freed entirely from the superstitious fears I had there imbibed; so that whenever any person asked me, what would become of me (that had lived such a holy life) if I should die in the state of backsliding from "the good old way?" I always acknowledged that I should be eternally damned, were that to be the case. But I must confess that I was not much afraid of dying in such a state, as I was too

much prepossessed with the methodistical notions of free-grace, that would not let me be finally lost, presuming that I must wait as it were for a second call to repentance, justification, &c., which I had been taught to believe might take place instantaneously, and put the devil to flight in a hurry, and so matters would be all right again. And I have known many who, having these ideas, have continued to live very profligate lives to the end of the chapter.

I often privately took the bible to bed with me, and in the long summer mornings read for hours together in bed, but this did not in the least influence my conduct. As you know great events often arise from little causes, I am now going to relate a circumstance, trivial in itself, though productive of a more considerable change in my situation than any I had yet experienced.

I was twenty-one years of age the 11th of September 1767; the election was over the latter end of March 1768. It was in this year that my new master's wife insisted on my purchasing milk of a milk-maid who was a customer at the shop; which command I refused to comply with, as I had a smart little milk-maid of my own. But as my mistress "wore the breeches," my master was obliged, by his wife's order, to inform me that I must comply with her mandate, or get another master. I left him without hesitation, and the same afternoon went to Wellington, took leave of my father and mother, and informed them of my intention to go to Bristol. After two or three days I returned to Taunton, where I stayed a day or two more. In which time I became enamoured with, or infatuated by, the beautiful Nancy Trott; and although I saw the impropriety of the measure, yet I could not resist the fair tempter, who prevailed with me to permit her to accompany me in my journey.

"Reason was given to curb our headstrong will,
And yet but shows a weak physician's skill;

Gives nothing while the raging fit does last,
But stays to cure it when the worst is past.
Reason's a staff for age, when nature's gone;
But youth is strong enough to walk alone."

DRYDEN'S Con. of Gran.

We rested a week in Bridgewater, where I worked hard and got money to convey us to Exbridge, seventeen miles on this side Bristol; and there I saw my conduct in such a point of view as made me to resolve to leave her.

" In well-feign'd accents, now they hail my ear,
My life, my love, my charmer, or my dear.
As if these sounds, these joyless sounds could prove
The smallest particle of genuine love.
O! purchas'd love, retailed through half the town,
Where each may share on paying half-a-crown;
Where every air of tenderness is art,
And not one word the language of the heart;
Where all is mockery of Cupid's reign,
Ends in remorse, in wetchedness and pain."

ART OF LIVING IN LONDON.

My finances amounted to three shillings and one penny, out of which I gave her half a crown; and with the remaining seven-pence, without informing her of my purpose, I set off for Bristol, where I arrived in a few hours, and got work the same evening.

A few days after, I went to the inn where the Taunton carrier put up, to enquire after Miss Trott, as I wanted to know if she had returned safe to Taunton. I was informed that she was in Bristol nearly as soon as I was. Knowing but little of the world, and still less of women of her description, I was quite unhappy on her account, for fear that being in a strange place she might be in want and distress; which thought induced me to offer to several of my countrymen five shillings to the first who should bring me an account where I might find her; but I did not see her until several weeks after that.

"Some foe to his upright intent
Finds out his weaker part;
Virtue engages his assent,
But pleasure wins the heart.
'Tis here the folly of the wise,
Through all his arts we view,
And while his tongue the charge denies,
His conscience owns it true."

COWPER.

The Taunton carrier gave me a letter from my good mistress Bowden (who by marrying again had changed her name to Dingle.) The contents of this letter very much surprised me. It informed me that a day or two before I fell out with my last mistress (which was the trifling cause of my leaving Taunton) Betty Tucker, a common lass, had sworn a child to me; that the parish officers had been to my master's shop within an hour after I had left it to go to Wellington, and that they had been at Wellington just as I had left that place; and afterwards hearing that I was in Bridgewater, they had pursued me thither. But the morning on which they arrived, I had set off for Exbridge; and believing that I had intentionally fled before them, they had given over this chase for the present.

Reflecting on this affair, although my conduct was very far from entitling me to entertain such a supposition, yet I was then weak enough to imagine that, being a particular favourite of heaven, a kind of miracle had been wrought to save me from a prison, or from marrying a woman I could not bear the idea of living with a single week; and as I had not any knowledge of her being with child (not having seen her for three months before) I had not taken any measure to avoid the consequence, but put myself in the way of the officers: for, as I have just told you, after I had taken leave of my father and mother, I went back to Taunton, and walked about publicly one whole day, and part of another.

This girl was delivered about two months afterwards of a still-born child, so that I was never troubled for expenses. Methinks you are ready to say with Pomfret,

" 'Tis easy to descend into the snare,
By the pernicious conduct of the fair :
But safely to return from their abode,
Requires the wit, the prudence of a God."

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XII.

" Terror in dreams the anxious mother moves,
Or bids fond virgins mourn their absent loves.
Sylvia in vain her wearied eyes would close,
Hark ! the sad death-watch clicks—adieu repose ;
The distant owl, or yelling mastiff near,
Terror still vibrates on the list'ning ear,
And bids the affrighted Sylvia vigils keep,
For fancy like Macbeth has murder'd sleep."

MR PRALL.

DEAR FRIEND,

THE subject of my last recalls to my mind a ridiculous affair which excited much mirth in that part of the country.

During the election at Taunton, a gentleman one day came in a post-chaise to the White Hart inn, kept by Mr Baldwin, and after having refreshed himself, strolled into the yard, and seeing the ostler, asked him if he could inform him where they took in the *news?* The ostler, understanding him in a literal sense, directed him to a bookseller's shop on the opposite side of the way; this shop was kept by Miss

A—d—n, a beautiful young lady of irreproachable character, and one whose fine understanding and polished taste did honour to the profession; which profession she only adopted for an amusement, as she possessed an independent fortune.

Our gentleman, on entering the shop, enquired of the shopmaid for her mistress; but the maid, being used to serve in the shop, and knowing that her mistress had some ladies with her, informed the gentleman that she could help him to anything that he wanted. But on his saying he had some private business with her mistress, he was shown into a back parlour, and the mistress being informed a gentleman wanted to speak to her, she went directly to him. The moment she entered the room, he clasped her in his arms, called her a divine creature, &c. This so alarmed Miss A—d—n, that she screamed aloud; on hearing which, the ladies, preceded by the housemaid and shopmaid, repaired to the parlour, where they found Miss A—d—n almost in fits. The gentleman, thinking it was only a trick to raise her price, took but little notice, on which one of the maids ran out and called in several of the neighbours, who on coming into the parlour, saw with astonishment our sir Harry Wildair taking improper liberties with Miss A—d—n, and desired him to desist. But he desired them not to attempt to put tricks on travellers, and ordered them to leave the room. Instead of obeying his injunctions, they in a resolute tone ordered our spark to go instantly about his business. However he still kept his ground, until the mayor of the town, who happened to live just by, was called in. Mr Mayor demanded to know why he took such freedom with the lady? Our gentleman, seeing that the affair began to look very serious, now became calm, and informed the company that, having an inclination for a frolic, he had inquired for a bad house, and had been directed there; adding, that if there had been any

mistake, he was very sorry for it, and would beg the lady's pardon. On hearing this the company was more surprised than before, and demanded of the gentleman who had informed him that that house was a bad house? He, without hesitation, replied, "The ostler at the White Hart." Upon this the ostler was sent for, and on his being asked if he had directed that gentleman to Miss A—d—n's as to a bad house, the poor fellow, with marks of terror and surprise, answered "No; the gentleman never asked me for a bad house, he only asked me for a house where they took in the news." So that the ostler's understanding him in a literal sense caused all the confusion. The affair however had got so much air, that our spark was glad to leave the town immediately.

A very strange unaccountable circumstance happened in this inn about the same time: one of those occurrences that puzzle the philosopher, and strengthen superstition in weak minds. Three or four gentlemen of the neighbourhood were drinking wine in one of the rooms, when the landlord of the inn (as it appeared to them) walked into the room, and coming up to the table around which they were seated, they addressed him with "Mr Baldwin, how do you do? Sit down, and take a glass of wine with us." But instead of doing as requested, the supposed innkeeper walked out of the room, without making any reply; which not only surprised but offended the company, who rang the bell violently, and on the waiter's appearance, they ordered him to send in his master. The waiter informed them that his master was not at home. The gentlemen replied that he was at home a few minutes since, and therefore they insisted on seeing him; but the man assured them they were mistaken, as his master was in Bristol, and had been there several days. They then ordered the waiter to send in Mrs Baldwin, who immediately appearing, the gentlemen

asked her where Mr Baldwin was, and she informed them, as the waiter had already done, that he was in Bristol, and had been there for several days: on which the gentlemen grew very angry, and swore that Mr Baldwin had just before come into the room, and on their requesting him to partake of their wine, had insulted them by going out of the room without deigning to give them an answer. Mrs Baldwin then drew out of her pocket a letter she had that morning received from Mr Baldwin, by which it was apparent that he really was in Bristol. The story was then told round the neighbourhood, and all the old women concluded that Mr Baldwin must certainly be dead, and that he died at the very instant that the gentlemen saw him come into the room; but Mr Baldwin returning two days after, rendered it necessary for them to vary their story; they then asserted that it was a token or some warning of his death, and had no doubt but it would very soon happen. It was generally thought that Mr Baldwin was weak enough to pay such attention to the story and the inference as to hurt his health, as he really died within a year after, and the old women were not a little pleased at the event, as it tended to justify the truth of their prediction.

A more ridiculous affair happened about ten years since at the Two Bells, opposite Whitchapel church. The landlord was sitting one night with some jovial company, one of whom happening to say that he prayed to God that such a thing should not come to pass, the landlord replied, in a good-humoured manner, "Your prayers will neither do good nor harm;" upon which the other said a deal to persuade the host that his prayers would do great things; but the more he said in praise of his prayers, the more the landlord laughed at and ridiculed him. The man at last insisted that he could pray the landlord to death in two months time, and offered to bet him a crown bowl of punch to the truth of it, which the landlord

accepting, the wager was laid, and almost every night after this the man came to the house, and constantly laughed at the landlord, and assured him he would lose his wager; and, however strange it may appear, our host did die within the time, and his widow paid the wager. I think there cannot remain a doubt that the ridiculous talk of the fellow actually affected the landlord's mind, and hastened his death; and the following instances tend also to show how easily the lives of some are shortened.

Joseph Scales, esq., about five years since, in turning short one day in one of the streets of London, met a man whom he had not seen for some time, and innocently addressed him with, "Ha! what are you alive yet!" which had such an effect on the poor man that he died a few hours after.

Being at Bristol about four years since, I inquired after a worthy leatherseller whom I had formerly known, and was informed that he was lately dead, and that his death was supposed to have been hastened by a famous fortune-teller who, having cast his nativity, declared he would die within six months, which affected his mind so as to accomplish the prediction. The story of the late Dr Pitcairn, of Edinburgh, and the collier, is well known. This strong healthy collier was, on his way to Edinburgh, made to believe by the doctor's students, although in perfect health, that he was really very ill, and went home to bed and died.

I have set down the above instances, in order to show how easy it is to trifle away the lives of our fellow-creatures; and surely such who wantonly do it, must afterwards have very gloomy reflections.

I am, dear friend, yours

LETTER XIII.

"I had a friend that lov'd me:
I was his soul: he liv'd not but in me.
We were so close link'd in each other's breast,
The rivets were not found that join'd us first."

DRYDEN'S All for Love.

DEAR FRIEND,

IN my last I mentioned my arrival at Bristol, where I took a lodging in a street called (I think,) Queen-street, in Castle-street, at the house of a Mr James; a much more decent residence than commonly falls to the lot of journeymen shoemakers.

In this house I found a Mr John Jones, a genteel young man, just turned of twenty-one years of age; he was also a son of Crispin, and made women's stuff shoes, which he sold by the dozen to warehouses. This Mr Jones and I were very soon intimate; we kept ourselves neatly dressed, and in general worked hard, spending our money chiefly in the company of women. As

"All men have follies, which they blindly trace
Through the dark turnings of a dubious maze.
But happy those who by a prudent care
Retreat betimes from the fallacious snare."

POMFRET.

We followed this course about four months. During this time Mr Jones once persuaded me to go with him to the playhouse, where we saw Shakespear's fine comedy of "As you like it." This was a feast indeed to me, who had never before seen nor even read any theatrical production. It is impossible for me to describe my sensations on the occasion. Between the play and the entertainment (which was the "Mayor of Garratt") Mr Edward Shuter performed a short piece called

"The Drunken Man." This was the only time that I ever saw that extraordinary genius, but he made such an impression on my mind that it is impossible I ever should forget him. I believe it is not generally known, as few would have ever suspected, that this child of Momus was also a child of grace.

Since the publication of the first edition of these Memoirs, I have read "The Memoirs of Mr Tate Wilkinson, Patentee of the Theatres Royal of York and Hull," and was much surprised to learn that the famous Ned Shuter was a gracious soul. I will give you a passage or two out of Mr Wilkinson's Memoirs, vol. iii. page 27, &c. "My imitation of Mr Whitefield was beyond compare. Mr Foote was struck by stepping in by chance and once hearing Whitefield; the mixture of whose absurdity, whim, consequence and extravagance pleased his fancy and entertained him highly, as Whitefield was that day dealing out damnation, fire and brimstone, as cheerfully as if they were so many blessings. What pity it is that our fears only and not our reason will bring conviction; but reason handled by unaffected pure piety and religion would be a day of woe to methodism.

"Mr Foote was only a spy at Whitefield's academy, while I (says Mr Wilkinson) had been a zealot; for some seasons before my encounter at Covent-garden with Mr Foote, my attendance had been constant with my friend Shuter, and as he actually was one of the new-born, and paid large sums to Whitefield, I was always permitted to stay with him, for he was really bewildered in his brains, more by his wishing to acquire imaginary grace, than by all his drinking; and whenever he was warm with the bottle, and with only a friend or two, like Mawworm, he could not mind his shop, because he thought it a sin, and wished to go a-preaching; for Shuter, like Mawworm, believed he had a call. I have gone with Shuter at six in the morning of a Sunday at Tottenham-court-road; then before ten to Mr Wesley's in Long-acre;

at eleven again at Tottenham-court-road Tabernacle; dined near Bedlam (a very proper place for us both) with a party of the holy ones; went at three to Mr Wesley's theatre; then from that to Whitefield's till eight; and then shut up, to commune with the family compact."—Page 29. "I having had so much practice, while a zealot, I really obtained and exhibited a much stronger likeness of Whitefield than Mr Foote did. The week before my Covent-garden exhibition, I met Shuter at the Tabernacle; a great coolness had continued for some time, as we had not spoke, or even looked at each other since the breach between us in 1758; but as we were met together in a place of charity and forgiveness to all who subscribed to the preacher, we became very sociable, and before Whitefield's lecture was done we were perfectly reconciled; we adjourned to the Rose, and by three the next morning were sworn friends, and continued so until his death. Ned Shuter was a lively, spirited, shrewd companion; a superior in natural whim and humour surely never inhabited a human breast; for what he said and did was all his own, as it was with difficulty he could read the parts he had to play, and could not write at all; he had attained to sign an order, but no more. Nature could not here bestow her gifts to greater advantage than on poor Ned, as what she gave he made shine, not only conspicuously but brilliantly, and to the delight of all who knew him on or off the stage. He might truly be dubbed the child of nature. He was no man's enemy but his own; peace, rest, and happiness I hope he now possesses, for the poor, the friendless and the stranger he often comforted, and when sometimes reduced by his follies, he never could see a real object in misery, and resist giving at least half he was worth to his distressed fellow creature."—Page 5, vol. iii. "But, Oh ye saints of your own creating, I will preach to you; mark! judge not of plays and players, lest you be judged; those who are the most censorious on the infirmities of others,

are usually most notoriously guilty of far greater failings themselves; and sanctified methodistical slander is of all the most severe, bitter and cruel."

Page 6. "In the comedy of the 'Hypocrite,' the Colonel says he supposes they go to the play for the benefit of the brethren. Cantwell answers, 'The charity covereth the sin,' which was actually the case, for in 1757, as Shuter was bountiful to the Tabernacle, Mr Whitefield not only permitted but advised his hearers to attend Shuter's benefit; but for that night only." Alas, poor Shuter!

It is singular enough that about this time, although I could not write, yet I composed several songs, one of which was sold for a guinea; some were given to the Bristol printers, who printed them, and the ballad-singers sang them about the streets, on which occasions I was as proud as though I had composed an opera.

"Obscurely born—no generous friend he found,
To lead his trembling steps o'er classic ground;
No patron fill'd his heart with flatt'ring hope;
No tutor'd lesson gave his genius scope;
And yet he soar'd beyond the spells that bind
The slow perception of the vulgar mind."

MRS ROBINSON.

My friend Mr Jones was my secretary, who before I came to live with him had not the least relish for books, and I had only read a few enthusiastic authors, together with Pomfret's poems; this last I could almost repeat by memory; however I made the most of my little stock of literature, and strongly recommended the purchasing of books to Mr Jones. But so ignorant were we on the subject, that neither of us knew what books were fit for our perusal, nor what to enquire for, as we had scarce ever heard or seen even any title pages, except a few of the religious sort, which at that time we had no relish for. So that we were at a loss how to increase our small stock of science. And here I cannot help thinking that had

Fortune thrown proper books in our way, we should have imbibed a just taste for literature, and soon made some tolerable progress; but such was our obscurity, that it was next to impossible for us ever to emerge from it.

"The mind untaught, in vain,
Her powers, tho' blooming vigour nourish,
Hopes in perfect pride to flourish;
Culture must her might maintain."

MR PINKERTON.

As we could not tell what to ask for, we were ashamed to go into the booksellers' shops, and I assure you, my friend, that there are thousands now in England in the very same situation; many, very many, have come to my shop, who have discovered an enquiring mind, but were totally at a loss what to ask for, and who had no friend to direct them.

"————————Reason grows apace, and calls
For the kind hand of an assiduous care.
Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot,
To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
To breathe th' enlivening spirit, and to fix
The gen'rous purpose in the glowing breast."

THOMSON.

One day, as my friend Jones and I were strolling about the fair that is annually held in and near St James's church-yard, we saw a stall of books, and in looking over the title pages, I met with Hobbes's Translation of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey. I had somehow or other heard that Homer was a great poet, but unfortunately I had never heard of Pope's translation of him, so we very eagerly purchased that by Hobbes. At this stall I also purchased Walker's poetical paraphrase of Epictetus's morals; and home we went, perfectly well pleased with our bargains.

We that evening began with Hobbes's Homer, but found it very difficult for us to read, owing to the ob-

scurity of the translation, which, together with the indifferent language, and want of poetical merit in the translator, somewhat disappointed us; however we had from time to time many a hard puzzling hour with him.

But as to Walker's Epictetus, although that had not much poetical merit, yet it was very easy to be read, and as easily understood. The principles of the Stoics charmed me so much, that I made the book my companion wherever I went, and read it over and over in raptures, thinking that my mind was secured against all the smiles or frowns of fortune.

"When foes revil'd, or friends betray'd,
Our hearts have wrung perhaps with sorrow;
But a firm effort always made
Complete resources for tomorrow.

"Then why repine at vice elate,
For injur'd worth our courage drown
Let us who cannot alter fate,
Mind no men's business but our own."

J. ROBERTSON's Martial.

I now grew weary of dissipating my time, and began to think of employing my spare hours in something more satisfactory. For want of something else to do, I went one evening to hear Mr John Wesley preach in Broadmead, and being completely tired of the way of life that I had lived, more or less, ever since I had been out of my apprenticeship, and happening to have no other pursuit or hobby-horse, there was a kind of vacuity in my mind; in this state I was very susceptible of any impressions, so that when I came to hear Mr Wesley, my old fanatical notions returned full upon me, and I was once more carried away by the tide of enthusiasm. So that the following lines by Mr S. Rogers might be applied to me with great propriety:

"His humour once o'er, with a grave contrite face
To the mead he repairs, that rich fountain of grace,

Where in spiritual fervour he turn'd up his eyes,
True mechanical saint! and in unison sighs;
With every true godly exterior indu'd,
As if from his cradle this line he'd pursu'd.'

My friend Mr Jones soon saw with grief and indignation the wonderful alteration in me, who, from a gay, volatile, dissipated young fellow, was at once metamorphosed into a dull, moping, praying, psalm-singing fanatic, continually reprehending all about me for their harmless mirth and gaiety.

"For saints themselves will often be
"Of gifts that cost them nothing free."

HUDIBRAS.

Nothing is more common than to see mankind run from one extreme to another, which was my case once more.

"Whate'er the leading passion be,
That works the soul's anxiety,
In each extreme th' effect is bad,
Sense grows diseas'd and reason mad."

E. LLOYD.

About this time we left our habitation in Queen-street, and took lodgings of Mr Jones's mother, on St Philip's Plain, where lived a brother of Mr Jones, who was about seventeen years of age. Soon after we had removed to this place, the brother, whose name was Richard Jones, was permitted to work in the same room with my friend and me. They had also a sister about twenty years of age, who frequently joined our company.

Our room overlooked the church-yard, which contributed to increase my gloomy ideas, and I had so much of the spiritual Quixotism in me, that I soon began to think that it was not enough for me to save my own soul, but I ought in conscience to attempt the conversion of my companions, who I really believed were in the high road to hell, and every moment liable to eternal damnation. Of this chari-

table disposition are almost all the Methodists; who, as Hudibras says,

> "Compound for sins they are inclin'd to,
> By damning those they have no mind to."

The frequency of newly-opened graves, which we saw from our windows, furnished me with opportunities for descanting on the uncertainty of life and all sublunary enjoyments; I assured them that nothing deserved attention but what related to our everlasting state, and that they might on their repentance receive in one moment the pardon of all their sins, have a foretaste of the joys of heaven, and know that their names were enrolled in the book of life. I farther protested that they had no time to lose, that they all stood on the very verge of hell, and the breaking-brink of eternal torments, with a great deal more of such edifying stuff.

The youngest brother soon became a convert, and Miss Betsy was "born again" soon after.

> "Lo! in the twinkling of an eye,
> Their souls were frank'd for kingdom come."

But I had a tight job to convert my friend John; he held out, and often cursed me heartily, and sang profane songs all day long.

But about four or five weeks after my re-conversion, John was also converted, and became a favourite of heaven, so that we considered ourselves as a holy community,

> "Who knew the seat of Paradise,
> Could tell in what degree it lies;
> Could deepest mysteries unriddle,
> As easily as thread a needle." HUDIBRAS.

A laughable affair happened during my residence here. A captain of a ship one day brought a parrot as a present to a family, the mistress of which, being a Methodist, happened to have one of the preachers call

in just as the dinner was putting on the table, so that the captain and the preacher were both asked to stay. As soon as the table was covered, the preacher began a long grace, in the midst of which Poll, who had been put in a corner of a room, cried out, "D—n your eyes, tip us none of your jaw." This, with the immoderate laughter of the captain, entirely disconcerted the pious chaplain; at last he began his grace again, but he had not got to the end before Poll again interrupted him with, "You d—d canting son of a b—h." By the above it appeared that the captain had tutored Poll on purpose to have some fun in this canting family; however, the good lady of the house made it a point of conscience to have Polly converted, but found it utterly impossible to effect that great change in the methodistical way, that is, instantaneously, as after she had scolded her six months for speaking bad words, and had actually taught her a part of the Lord's prayer, yet Poll would not entirely leave off her sea language, so that it often happened while the good lady was teaching her to pray, Poll would out with, "D—n your eyes, tumble up, you lubbers;" and even after she had preached to her several years, she would not venture to say that Poll was in a state of grace; but be that as it will, Poll obtained the name of Methodist, being called by the neighbours the Methodist Parrot.

I must inform you also that the poor preacher above mentioned was but just come out of Wales, and understood English but very imperfectly, and in the course of his sermon one day he had forgot the English for the word lamb, and after hammering a good while about it, he out with—"Goddymighty's little mutton, that took away the sins of the world," which caused a good deal of diversion among the ungodly.

I am, dear friend, yours.

Bayerische
Staatsbibliothek
München

LETTER XIV.

" ——— He was a shrewd philosopher,
And had read every text and gloss over;
Whate'er the crabbed's author hath,
He understood b'implicit faith;
Whatever sceptic could enquire for,
For ev'ry why he had a wherefore;
Knew more than forty of them do,
As far as words and terms could go,
All which he understood by rote,
And as occasion serv'd would quote;
No matter whether right or wrong,
They might be either said or sung."

HUDIBRAS.

DEAR FRIEND,

MR John Jones and myself were now greater friends than ever, so that one would on no account stir out of the house without the other.

Mr Jones had the advantage of me in temporals, he could get more money than I could, but as to grace and spiritual gifts I had much the advantage of all our community, so that I was their spiritual director; and if they thought that any of their acquaintance held any opinions that were not quite sound and orthodox, such were introduced to me, in order that I might convince them of their errors. In fact, I was looked upon as an apostle, so that whatever I asserted was received as pure gospel, nor was anything undertaken without my advice.

We all worked very hard, particularly Mr John Jones and I, in order to get money to purchase books, and for some months every shilling we could spare was laid out at old book-shops, stalls, &c., insomuch that in a short time we had what *we* called a very good library. This choice collection consisted

of Polhill on Precious Faith, Polhill on the Decrees, Shepherd's Sound Believer, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Bunyan's Good News for the Vilest of Sinners, his Heavenly Footman, his Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners, his Life and Death of Mr Badman, his Holy War in the town of Mansoul, Hervey's Meditations, Hervey's Dialogues, Roger's Seven Helps to Heaven, Hall's Jacob's Ladder, Divine Breathings of a Devout Soul, Adams on the Second Epistle of Peter, Adams's Sermons on the Black Devil, the White Devil, &c. &c. Colling's Divine Cordial for the Soul, Pearse's Soul's Espousal to Christ, Erskine's Gospel Sonnets, the Death of Abel, the Faith of God's Elect, Manton on the Epistle of St James, Pamble's Works, Baxter's Shove for a Heavy-a***d Christian, his Call to the Unconverted, Mary Magdalen's Funeral Tears, Mrs Moore's Evidences for Heaven, Mead's Almost a Christian, the Sure Guide to Heaven, Brooks on Assurance, God's Revenge against Murder, Brooks's Heaven upon Earth, the Pathway to Heaven, Wilcox's Guide to Eternal Glory, Derham's Unsearchable Riches of Christ, his Exposition of Revelations, Alleine's Sure Guide to Heaven, the Sincere Convert, Watson's Heaven taken by Storm, Heaven's Vengeance, Wall's None but Christ, Aristotle's Masterpiece, Coles on God's Sovereignty, Charnock on Providence, Young's Short and Sure Guide to Salvation, Wesley's Sermons, Journals, Tracts, &c.; and others of the same description.

We had indeed a few of a better sort, as Gay's Fables, Pomfret's Poems, Milton's Paradise Lost, besides Hobbes's Homer, and Walker's Epictetus, mentioned in my last letter

But what we wanted in judgment in choosing our library we made up in application; so anxious were we to read a great deal, that we allowed ourselves but about three hours sleep in twenty-four, and for some months together we never were all in bed at the same time. (Sunday nights excepted.) But lest we

should oversleep the time allowed, one of us sat up to work until the time appointed for the others to rise, and when all were up, my friend John and your humble servant took it by turns to read aloud to the rest, while they were at their work.

"Such there are, denied by stars unkind,
The seasons to exert the noble mind,
Should watch occasions, and attend the hours,
And catch the moments, to indulge their pow'rs."

COOKE.

But this mad scheme of ours had nearly been attended with very serious consequences. One night, it being my turn to watch, I removed to the fire-side, to read some particular passage, and the candlestick which we worked by not being convenient to move about, and there being no other at that time in the room, I set up the candle against the handle of a pewter pot, and was so extremely heavy (owing to much watchfulness) that I fell fast asleep, and had like never to have awaked again, for the candle burned down to the handle of the pot, melted it off, and then fell on the chair on which it stood; so that Mr Jones found me in the morning fast asleep, and part of the chair consumed, which alarmed us all very much, and made us more cautious.

But still we continued our plan of living, so that we made a rapid progress in what we called spiritual and divine knowledge, and were soon masters of the various arguments made use of by most polemical divines, &c.

And the better to guard my pupils from what I called false doctrines, I used often to engage them in various controversies, in which I sometimes took one side of the question, sometimes the other, in order to make them well versed in controversy, and acquainted with the strength of their adversaries. So that I was, by turns, a Calvinist, an Arminian, an Arian, a Socinian, a Deist, and even an Atheist. And after they

had said all they could to confute me, I would point out where they had failed, and added such arguments as I was master of, and in general we were all satisfied. But when we happened to have any doubts we had recourse to the bible and commentators of our own side of the question; and I assure you, my dear friend, this was a very fine hobby-horse, which, like Aaron's serpent, swallowed up all the other hobby-horses.

"Light minds are pleased with trifles."—OVID.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XV.

"Laugh where you must; be candid where you can."
POPE.

"Know then, that always when you come,
You'll find me sitting on my bum:
Or lying on a couch, surrounded
With tables, pens, and books, confounded;
Wrapt up in lofty speculation,
As if on the safety of the nation." HUME.

DEAR FRIEND,

IN the course of my reading, I learned that there had been various sects of philosophers amongst the Greeks, Romans, &c., and I well remembered the names of the most eminent of them. At an old book shop I purchased Plato on the Immortality of the Soul, Plutarch's Morals, Seneca's Morals, Epicurus's Morals, the Morals of Confucius the Chinese Philosopher, and a few others. I now can scarcely help thinking that I received more real benefit from reading and studying them and Epictetus, than from all other

books that I had read before, or have ever read since that time.

"I read the labours of the pen,
And thought them more than common men."

I was but about twenty-two years of age when I first began to read those fine moral productions; and I assure you, my friend, that they made a very deep and lasting impression on my mind. By reading them, I was taught to bear the unavoidable evils attending humanity, and to supply all my wants by contracting or restraining my desires.

"To mend my virtues, and exalt my thought,
What the bright sons of Greece and Rome have wrote,
O'er day and night I turn; in them we find
A rich repast for the luxurious mind." COOKE.

It is now twenty-three years since I first perused them, during which time I do not recollect that I have ever felt one anxious painful wish to get money, estates, or any way to better my condition:

"Indeed, my friend, were I to find
That wealth could e'er my real wishes gain;
Had e'er disturb'd my thoughtful mind,
Or cost one serious moment's pain;
I should have said, that all the rules,
I learn'd of moralists and schools,
Were very useless, very vain."

And yet I have never since that time let slip any fair opportunity of doing it. Be contented, says Isocrates, with what you have, and seek at the same time to make the best improvement of it you can. So that all I mean is, that I have not been over solicitous to obtain anything that I did not possess; but could at all times say, with St Paul, that I have learned to be contented in all situations, although at times they have been very gloomy indeed. Dryden says,

"We to ourselves may all our wishes grant,
For nothing coveting, we nothing want."
DRYDEN'S Indian Emperor.

And in another place he says,

"They cannot want who wish not to have more:
Who ever said an anchoret was poor?"

DRYDEN's Secret Love.

The pleasure of eating and drinking I entirely despised, and for some time carried this disposition to an extreme, and even to the present time I feel a very great indifference about these matters; when in company, I frequently dine off one dish, when there are twenty on the table. The account of Epicurus living in his garden, at the expense of about a halfpenny per day, and that when he added a little cheese to his bread on particular occasions, he considered it as a luxury, filled me with raptures.

"He talk'd of virtue, and of human bliss,
What else so fit for man to settle well?
And still his long researches met in this,
This truth of truths which nothing can repel—
From virtue's fount the purest joys outwell
Sweet rills of thought that cheer the conscious soul,
While vice pours forth the troubled streams of hell;
Which, howe'er disguis'd, at last will dole;
Will through the tortur'd breast their fiery torrent roll."

THOMSON.

From that moment I began to live on bread and tea, and for a considerable time did not partake of any other viands, but in those I indulged myself three or four times a day. My reasons for living in this abstemious manner were in order to save money to purchase books, to wean myself from the gross pleasures of eating and drinking, &c. and to purge my mind, and to make it more susceptible of intellectual pleasures; and here I cannot help remarking, that the term Epicure, when applied to one who makes the pleasures of the table his chief good, casts an unjust reflection on Epicurus, and conveys a wrong idea of that contemplative and very abstemious philosopher; for although he asserted that pleasure was the chief or

supreme good, yet he also as strongly asserted that it was the tranquillity of the mind, and intellectual pleasure, that he so extolled and recommended. "This pleasure," says he, "that is the very centre of our happiness, consists in nothing else than having our mind free from disturbance, and our body free from pain; drunkenness, excessive eating, niceness in our liquors, and all that seasons good cheer, have nothing in them that can make life happy; there is nothing but frugality and tranquillity of mind that establish this happy state; it is this calm that facilitates our distinguishing betwixt those things that ought to be our choice, and those we ought to shun, and it is by the means thereof that we discard those notions that discompose this first mover of our life."

"When Epicurus to the world had taught
That pleasure was the chiefest good,
(And was perhaps in the right, if rightly understood)
His life he to his doctrines brought,
And in a garden's shade that sovereign pleasure sought;
Whoever a true Epicure would be,
May there find cheap and virtuous luxury."

COWLEY'S Garden.

St Evremont, in his vindication of Epicurus, says, "Ignorant men know not his worth. Wise men have given large and honourable testimonies of his exalted virtue and sublime precepts. They have fully proved his pleasures to be as severe as the Stoic's virtue; that to be debauched like Epicurus, a man must be as sober as Zeno. His temperance was so great that his ordinary diet was nothing but bread and water. The Stoics and all other philosophers agree with Epicurus in this; that the true felicity of life is to be free from perturbations, to understand our duty towards God and man, and to enjoy the present without any anxious dependence upon the future, not to amuse ourselves either with hopes or fears; to curb and restrain our unruly appetites; to rest satisfied

with what we have, which is abundantly sufficient, for he that is content wants nothing."

"Some place the bliss in action, some in ease;
Those call it pleasure, and contentment these;
Some, sunk to beasts, find pleasure end in pain;
Some, swell'd to gods, confess e'en virtue vain."

POPE.

I continued the above self-denying life until I left Bristol, which was on Whitsunday in 1769. I had for some time before been pointing out to my friend John Jones some of the pleasures and advantages of travelling, so that I easily prevailed on him to accompany me towards the west of England; and in the evening we arrived at Bridgewater, where Mr Jones got work. He was employed by Mr Cash, with whom he continued near twelve months, and in the end married Mr Cash's daughter, a very pretty and very amiable little woman, with some fortune. When my friend was offered work by Mr Cash, I prevailed on him to accept of it, assuring him that I had no doubt of my being able to get work at Taunton; but in that I was disappointed, nor could I get a constant seat of work until I came to Exeter, and of that place I was soon tired; but being informed that a Mr John Taylor of Kingsbridge (forty miles below Exeter) wanted such a hand, I went down and was gladly received by Mr Taylor, whose name inspires me with gratitude, as he never treated me as a journeyman, but made me his companion. Nor was any part of my time ever spent in a more agreeable, pleasing manner than that which I passed in this retired place, or I believe more profitable to a master. I was the first man he ever had that was able to make stuff and silk shoes, and it being also known that I came from Bristol, this had great weight with the country ladies, and procured my master customers, who generally sent for me to take measure of their feet, and I was noked upon by all to be the best workman in the

town, although I had not been brought up to stuff-work, nor had ever entirely made one stuff or silk shoe before. Nor should I have presumed to pro claim myself a stuff-man, had there been any such workmen in the place; but as there were none, I boldly ventured and succeeded very well, nor did any one in the town ever know that it was my first attempt in that branch.

During the time that I lived here, I as usual was obliged to employ one or other of my acquaintance to write my letters for me. This procured me much praise among the young men as a good inditer of letters. (I need not inform you that they were not good judges.) My master said to me one day, he was surprized that I did not learn to write my own letters; and added, that he was sure that I could learn to do it in a very short time. The thought pleased me much, and without any delay I set about it, by taking up any pieces of paper that had writing on them, and imitating the letters as well as I could. I employed my leisure hours in this way for near two months, after which time I wrote my own letters, in a bad hand, you may be sure; but it was plain and easy to read, which was all I cared for; nor to the present moment can I write much better, as I never would have any person to teach me, nor was I ever possessed of patience enough to employ time sufficient to learn to write well; and yet as soon as I was able to scribble, I wrote verses on some trifle or other every day for years together.

Out of some thousands I at present recollect the following, which I placed by the side of the figure of a clergyman in his robes, with his hands and eyes lifted up; this image stood over the fire-place in my room.

Here's a shoemaker's chaplain has negative merit,
As his vice he ne'er flatters or ruffles his spirit;
No wages receiving, his conscience is clear;
Not prone to deceiving, he's nothing to fear.

'Tis true he is silent—but that's nothing new;
And if you'd repent, his attitude view;
With uplifted hands all vice to reprove,
How solemn he stands, his eyes fix'd above!

As a kind of contrast I will insert an epigram that I wrote but a few days since on an ignorant Methodist preacher.

A stupid fellow told me t'other day,
That by the spirit he could preach and pray;
Let none then say that miracles have ceas'd,
As God still opes the mouth of beast;
And asses now can speak as plain
As e'er they could in Balaam's reign.

But I always wrote as fast as I could, without endeavouring to write well; and that this is my present practice, I need not inform you.

I came to this place in but a weak state of body; however, the healthy situation of the town, together with bathing in the salt water, soon restored me to perfect health. I passed thirteen months here in a very happy manner; but the wages for work being very low, and as I had spent much time in writing hymns to every song tune that I knew, besides a number of love verses, letters, &c. I was very poor, and to complete all, I began to keep a deal of company, in which I gave a loose to my natural gaiety of disposition, much more than was consistent with the grave, sedate ideas which I had formed of a religious character; all which made me resolve to leave Kingsbridge, which I did in 1770.

I travelled as far as Exeter the first day, where I worked about a fortnight, and saved sufficient to carry me to Bridgewater, where I worked two or three weeks more. Before I arrived there Mr John Jones had gone back to reside at Bristol, but as soon as he heard of my being in Bridgewater, he and his brother Richard sent me an invitation to come to Bristol again and live with them. Finding that I did not immediately comply, they both came to Bridgewater.

and declared their intentions of not returning to Bristol without me; so that after a day or two I yielded to their solicitations, and again lived very comfortably with them, their mother and sister.

I think it was about this period that I went several times to the Tabernacle, and heard Mr George Whitefield; and of all the preachers that ever I attended, never did I meet with one that had such a perfect command over the passions of his audience. In every sermon that I heard him preach, he would sometimes make them ready to burst with laughter, and the next moment drown them in tears; indeed it was scarcely possible for the most guarded to escape the effect.

"He had something 'twas thought still more horrid to say,
When his tongue lost its powers and he fainted away;
Some say 'twas his conscience that gave him a stroke,
But those who best knew him treat that as a joke;
'Tis a trick which stage orators use in their need,
The passions to raise and the judgment mislead."

SIMKIN.

In one of my excursions I passed many agreeable hours with the late Mr La Bute, at Cambridge, who was well known, he having taught French in that university upwards of forty years. He informed me that near forty years since, Mr Whitefield having advertised himself to preach at Gog-Magog-Hill, many thousand people collected together from many miles round. While he was preaching, he was elevated on the highest ground, and his audience stood all round on the declivity; during his sermon, a young countrywoman, who had come miles to hear him, and waited several hours, being very faint, owing to the violent heat of the sun, the breaths of the multitude, as well as the want of refreshment; and it is very likely much agitated in her mind by the extraordinary doctrines of the preacher, she fell backwards just under the orator, and there lay kicking up her heels. On seeing the poor girl lie in a kind of convulsion, some

of the company moved to assist her, and the women began to draw down her apron and petticoats over her feet; but Mr Whitefield cried out, "Let her alone! let her alone! A glorious sight! a glorious sight!" No doubt the holy man meant that it was a glorious sight to see a sinner fall before the power of the word; but the young college bucks and wits construed his meaning differently, and put the audience into such immoderate fits of laughter, that even Mr Whitefield's utmost efforts were not able to restore their gravity, but he was obliged to dismiss his congregation abruptly.

For a long time after this happened, the Cantabs, as they reeled homewards in the night-time, disturbed the sober inhabitants, by loudly exclaiming, "A glorious sight! a glorious sight! as Dr Squintum says."

I am, dear friend, yours

LETTER XVI.

"Love, the most generous passion of the mind;
The softest refuge innocence can find;
The soft director of unguided youth,
Fraught with kind wishes, and secured by truth;
The cordial drop heav'n in our cup has thrown,
To make the nauseous draught of life go down;
On which one only blessing God might raise,
In lands of atheists subsidies of praise;
For none did e'er so dull and stupid prove,
But felt a God, and bless'd his pow'r, in love."

NONPAREIL.

DEAR FRIEND,

I MUST now request you to go back with me a few years, as I have not yet made you acquainted with my

principal amours. I was about seventeen years of age when an adventure discovered, that although I was so very spiritual, as I before informed you, I was notwithstanding susceptible of another kind of impression.

"Oh, let me still enjoy the cheerful day,
Till many years unheeded o'er me roll;
Pleas'd in my age I trifle life away,
And tell how much I lov'd ere I grew old."
HAMMOND'S Love Elegies.

Being at farmer Gamlin's at Charlton, four miles from Taunton, to hear a Methodist sermon, I fell desperately in love with the farmer's handsome dairy-maid.

"Her home-spun dress in simple neatness lies,
And for no glaring equipage she sighs.
She gratefully receives what heav'n has sent,
And, rich in poverty, enjoys content.
Her reputation which is all her boast,
In a malicious visit ne'er was lost.
No midnight masquerade her beauty wears,
And health, not paint, the fading bloom repairs.
If love's soft passions in her bosom reign,
An equal passion warms her happy swain." GAY.

At that time I abounded in spiritual gifts, which induced this honest rustic maid to be very kind to me, and to walk several fields with me in my road back to Taunton, talking all the way of her spiritual distress and godly concerns; while I poured heavenly comfort into her soul, and talked so long of divine love, until I found that my affection for her was not altogether of that spiritual nature. And yet

"We lov'd without transgressing virtue's bounds:
We fix'd the limits of our tenderest thoughts,
Came to the verge of honour, and there stopp'd;
We warm'd us by the fire, but were not scorch'd.
If this be sin, angels might live with more;
And mingle rays of minds less pure than ours."
DRYDEN'S Love Triumphant.

After this you may be sure that I did not let slip any opportunity of hearing sermons at farmer Gamlin's; and I generally prevailed with Nancy Smith, my charming spiritual dairy-maid, to accompany me part of the way home, and at every gate I accompanied my spiritual advice with a kiss.

"——Oh then the longest summer's day
Seem'd too, too much in haste; still the full heart
Had not imparted half: 'twas happiness
Too exquisite to last. Of joys departed
Never to return, how painful the remembrance!"

BLAIR'S Grave.

But alas! these comfortable Sunday walks were soon at an end; as my charming Nancy Smith, for some reason or other (I have forgot what) left her place, and went to live as dairy-maid with a farmer in the marsh country, between Bridgewater and Bristol, seventeen miles from Taunton, so that I did not see her for near two years afterwards, during which time I gave spiritual advice to another holy sister, whose name was Hannah Allen.

"Sure philosophy, reason, and coolness must prove
Defences unequal to shield us from love."

C. J. Fox.

I prevailed on this lovely maid to attend the Methodist preaching at five o'clock on Monday mornings, and we often met at three or four, so that we had an hour or two to spend in walking and conversation on spiritual affairs. Had you seen and heard us on the cold frosty mornings, it would have put you in mind of Milton's Devils, whom he represents as at times starving with cold:

"Others apart, sat on a hill, retir'd,
In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate;
Fix'd fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute;
And found no end in wandering mazes lost."

PARADISE LOST.

But I assure you, my friend, that we were sometimes like the Galatians of old; we began in the spirit, and ended in the flesh.

"Now on the moss-bank, beneath the shade,
For hours of love, or meditation made;
To the soft passion I my heart resign,
To make the long obdurate maiden mine." COOKE.

With this dear girl I spent all my leisure time, for two or three years; so that we enjoyed together hundreds of happy, and I can truly add, innocent hours.

"O days of bliss!
To equal this
Olympus strives in vain;
O happy pair,
O happy fair!
O happy, happy swain!"

JOANNES SECUNDUS.

But yet I never could entirely forget my charming innocent dairy-maid. In fact, I had love enough for both, to have taken either for better or worse; but my being an apprentice prevented me from marrying at that time.

"Absence," says Rochefoucault, "lessens moderate passions, but increases great ones, like the wind which blows out tapers, but kindles fire."

It is true, I had the greatest love for Nancy Smith; but Hannah Allen had the advantage of Nancy, as I could see Hannah almost every day, and Nancy only once or twice in about three years. However, I at last fell out with Hannah (on what occasion I cannot recollect) and I sent Nancy a letter, which made up matters with her; for, like Sterne, I was "always in love with one goddess or other;" and Xenophon in his banquet, informs us, that the divine Socrates said, that he never remembered that he was ever without being in love, nor would he part from the company without saying something on "the attributes of that

great power; he resembles but a child, says he, who by his power is master of all things, and is grafted into the very essence and constitution of the soul of man."

Soon after, Nancy Smith came to live for a little time at her father's house at Petherton, near Bridgewater, seven miles from Taunton. This happened during the election at Taunton, when I was changed from a strict Methodist to a rake; and although the wedding ring was purchased, and we were to have been married in a few days, yet the marriage was put off on account of my dissipated character.

"With wine I strove to soothe my love-sick soul,
But vengeful Cupid dash'd with tears the bowl:
All mad with rage, to kinder nymphs I flew."

GRAINGER'S Tibullus.

I soon after set off for Bristol, as I before informed you; nor did I see her after that, until my return from Kingsbridge, when i saw her several times prior to my setting off for Bristol with my friend Jones, and his brother Richard.

I am, dear friend, yours

LETTER XVII.

" The man who by his labour gets
His bread in independent state,
Who never begs, and seldom eats,
Himself can fix, or change his fate."
PRIOR.

" If you will use the little that you have,
More has not heav'n to give, or you to crave:
Cease to complain. He never can be poor
Who has sufficient, and who wants no more.
If but from cold, and pining hunger free,
The richest monarch can but equal thee."
HORACE IMITATED.

DEAR FRIEND,

I HAD not long resided a second time with my good Bristol friends, before I renewed my correspondence with my old sweetheart Nancy Smith. I informed her that my attachment to books, together with travelling from place to place, and also my total disregard for money, had prevented me from saving any; and that while I remained in a single unsettled state, I was never likely to accumulate it. I also pressed her very much to come to Bristol to be married, which she soon complied with: and married we were, at St Peter's church, towards the end of the year 1770; near seven years after my first making love to her.

" When join'd in hand and heart, to church we went,
Mutual in vows, and pris'ners by consent.
My Nancy's heart beat high, with mix'd alarms,
But trembling beauty glow'd with double charms:

In her soft breast a modest struggle rose,
How she should seem to like the lot she chose:
A smile she thought would dress her looks too gay:
A frown might seem too sad, and blast the day.
But while nor this, nor that, her will could bow,
She walk'd, and look'd, and charm'd, and knew not how.
Our hands at length th' unchanging fiat bound,
And our glad souls sprung out to meet the sound.
Joys meeting joys unite, and stronger shine:
For passion purified is half divine:
Now NANCY thou art mine, I cried—and she
Sigh'd soft—now JEMMY thou art lord of me!"

A. HILL.

We kept our wedding at the house of my friends the Messrs Jones's, and at bed-time retired to ready-furnished lodgings, which we had before provided, at half-a-crown per week. Our finances were but just sufficient to pay the expenses of the day, for the next morning, in searching our pockets (which we did not do in a careless manner) we discovered that we had but one halfpenny to begin the world with. But—

"The hearth was clean, the fire clear,
The kettle on for tea:
Palemon, in his elbow chair,
As bless'd as man could be.
Clarinda, who his heart possess'd,
And was his new-made bride,
With head reclin'd upon his breast,
Sat toying by his side.
Palemon with a heart elate,
Pray'd to Almighty Jove,
That it might ever be his fate,
Just so to live and love."

It is true, we had laid in eatables sufficient for a day or two, in which time we knew we could by our work procure more, which we very cheerfully set about, singing together the following lines of Dr Cotton:

" Our portion is not large indeed,
But then how little do we need?
For Nature's calls are few;
In this the art of living lies:
To want no more than may suffice,
And make that little do."

The above, and the following ode by Mr Fitzgerald, did we scores of times repeat, even with raptures!

" No glory I covet, no riches I want,
Ambition is nothing to me:
The one thing I beg of kind heaven to grant,
Is, a mind independent and free.

By passion unruffled, untainted by pride,
By reason my life let me square;
The wants of my nature are cheaply supplied,
And the rest are but folly and care.

Those blessings which Providence kindly has lent,
I'll justly and gratefully prize;
While sweet meditation and cheerful content,
Shall make me both healthy and wise.

In the pleasures the great man's possessions display,
Unenvied I'll challenge my part;
For every fair object my eyes can survey,
Contributes to gladden my heart.

How vainly thro' infinite trouble and strife,
The many their labours employ;
When all that is truly delightful in life.
Is what all, if they will, may enjoy."

After having worked on stuff-work in the country, I could not bear the idea of returning to the leather branch, so that I attempted and obtained a seat of stuff in Bristol. But better work being required there than in Kingsbridge, &c., I was obliged to take so much care to please my master, that at first I could not get more than nine shillings a-week, and my wife could get but very little, as she was learning to bind stuff-shoes, and had never been much used to her

needle; so that what with the expense of ready furnished lodging, fire, candles, &c., we had but little left for purchasing provisions.

To increase our straits, my old friend being somewhat displeased at our leaving him and his relations, took an early opportunity to tell me that I was indebted to him near forty shillings, of two years standing. It is more dishonourable (says Rochefoucault) to distrust our friends, than to be deceived by them. I was not convinced of the justice of the claim, but to avoid dispute I paid him in about two months.

"But if friends prove unfaithful, and fortune's a w——e,
Still may I be virtuous, although I am poor."

A. Bourne.

During nearly the whole of which time it was extremely severe weather, and yet we made four shillings and sixpence per week pay for the whole of what we consumed in eating and drinking. Strong beer we had none, nor any other liquor, (the pure element excepted), and instead of tea, or rather coffee, we toasted a piece of bread; at other times we fried some wheat, which when boiled in water made a tolerable substitute for coffee; and as to animal food we made use of but little, and that little we boiled and made broth of.

"The recollection of past toils is sweet." Euripides.

During the whole of this time we never once wished for anything that we had not got, but were quite contented, and with a good grace, in reality made a virtue of necessity. We

"Trembled not with vain desires,
Few the things which life requires." Francis's Horace.

And the subject of our prayer was,

"This day be bread and peace our lot,
All else beneath the sun,

Thou know'st if best bestow'd or not,
And let thy will be done."

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XVIII.

"To temper thus the stronger fires
Of youth he strove, for well he knew,
Boundless as thought tho' man's desires,
The real wants of life are few."

CARTWRIGHT.

"In adverse hours an equal mind maintain."

FRANCIS's Horace.

DEAR FRIEND,

IN a few days after we had paid the last five shillings of the debt claimed by my friend Mr Jones, we were both together taken so ill as to be confined to our bed, but the good woman of the house, our landlady, came to our room and did a few trifles for us. She seemed very much alarmed at our situation, or rather for her own, I suppose, as thinking we might in some measure become burthensome to her. W had in cash two shillings and nine-pence, half-a-crown of which we had carefully locked up in a box, to be saved as a resource on any extraordinary emergence. This money supported us two or three days, in which time I recovered without the help of medicine: but my wife continued ill near six months, and was confined to her bed the greatest part of the time; which illness may very easily be accounted for.

Before she came to Bristol, she had ever been used to a very active life, and had always lived in the country, so that in coming to dwell in a populous

city, she had exchanged much exercise and good air for a sedentary life and very bad air; and this I presume was the cause of all her illness from time to time, which at length, as unfortunately as effectually, undermined her constitution. During her first six months' illness, I lived many days solely on water-gruel. "What nature requires, (says Montaigne), is so small a matter, that by its littleness it escapes the gripes of fortune;" for as I could not afford to pay a nurse, much of my time was taken up in attendance on her, and most of my money expended in procuring medicines, together with such trifles as she could eat and drink. But what added extremely to my calamity was the being within the hearing of her groans, which were caused by the excruciating pains in her head, which for months together defied the power of medicine.

It is impossible for words to describe the keenness of my sensations during this long term; yet as to myself, my poverty and being obliged to live upon water-gruel gave me not the least uneasiness.

"In ruffling seasons I was calm,
And smil'd when fortune frown'd." YOUNG.

But the necessity of being continually in the sight and hearing of a beloved object, a young, charming, handsome, innocent wife—

"Who sick in bed lay gasping for her breath;
Her eyes, like dying lamps, sunk in their sockets,
Now glar'd, and now drew back their feeble light:
Faintly her speech fell from her fault'ring tongue
In interrupted accents, as she strove
With strong agonies that shook her limbs
And writh'd her tortur'd features into forms
Hideous to sight." BELLER's Injured Innocence.

How I supported this long dreary scene I know not; the bare recollection of which is exceedingly painful, even at this distance of time.

" Lo, from amidst affliction's night
Hope burst all radiant on the sight;
Her words the troubled bosom soothe.
Why thus dismay'd?
Hope ne'er is wanting to their aid,
Who tread the path of truth.
'Tis I, who smooth the rugged way,
I, who close the eyes of sorrow,
And with glad visions of tomorrow,
Repair the weary soul's decay."

BEATTIE's Ode to Hope.

At last, when everything that seemed to promise relief had been tried in vain, some old woman recommended *cephalic* snuff. I own I had not much faith in it; however, I procured it, and in a short time after she was much relieved from the intolerable pain in her head, but yet continued in a very bad state of health; her constitution having suffered such a dreadful shock, I thought that no means could be used so likely to restore it, as a removal to her native air. Accordingly I left my seat of work at Bristol, and returned with her to Taunton, which is about seven miles from Petherton, her native place. But in Taunton I could not procure so much work as I could do; so that as soon as I thought she could bear the air of Bristol we returned thither, where she soon relapsed, and we again went back to Taunton. This removing to Taunton was repeated about five times in little more than two years and a half.

" Of chance or change, O let not man complain,
Else shall he never cease to wail!
For, from the imperial dome, to where the swain
Rears the lone cottage in the silent dale,
All feel th' assault of fortune's fickle gale."

MINSTREL.

But at last, finding that she had long fits of illness at Taunton also, as well as at Bristol, with a view of having a better price for my work I resolved to visit

London; and, as I had not money sufficient to bear the expenses of both to town, I left her all the money I could spare, and took a place on the outside of the stage coach, and the second day arrived at the metropolis, in August 1773, with two shillings and sixpence in my pocket; and recollecting the address of an old townsman, who was also a spiritual brother,

> " Whose hair in greasy locks hung down,
> As strait as candles from the crown,
> To shade the borders of his face,
> Whose outward signs of inward grace
> Were only visible in spiteful
> Grimaces, very stern and frightful."
>
> BUTLER'S Posth. Works.

This holy brother was also a journeyman shoemaker, who had arrived at the summit of his expectations, being able to keep a house over his head, (as he chose to express himself,) that is, by letting nearly the whole of it out in lodgings, he was enabled to pay the rent. This house was in White-cross street, which I found out the morning after my arrival, where I procured a lodging, and Mr Heath, in Fore street, supplied me with plenty of work.

> " I laugh'd then and whistled, and sang too most sweet,
> Saying, just to a hair I've made both ends meet.
> Derry-down."

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XIX.

" I'll travel no more—I'll try a London audience—
Who knows but I may get an engagement ?"

WILD OATS.

" When superstition (bane of manly virtues !)
Strikes root within the soul, it overruns
And kills the power of reason."

PHILLIP's Duke of Gloucester.

DEAR FRIEND,

AT this time I was as visionary and superstitious as ever I had been at any preceeding period, for although I had read some sensible books, and had thereby acquired a few rational ideas, yet, having had a methodistical wife for near three years, and my keeping methodistical company, together with the gloomy notions which in spite of reason and philosophy I had imbibed during the frequent, long, and indeed almost constant illness of my wife, the consequence was, that those few rational or liberal ideas which I had before treasured up, were at my coming to London in a dormant state, or borne down by the torrent of enthusiastic whims, and fanatical chimeras.

——— " Oh ! what a reasonless machine
Can superstition make the reas'ner man !"

MALLET's Mahomet.

So that as soon as I procured a lodging and work, my next enquiry was for Mr Wesley's gospel-shops: and on producing my class and band tickets from Taunton I was put into a class, and a week or two after admitted into a band.

But it was several weeks before I could firmly re-

solve to continue in London; as I really was struck with horror for the fate of it, more particularly on Sundays, as I found so few went to church, and so many were walking and riding about for pleasure, and the lower class getting drunk, quarrelling, fighting, working, buying, selling, &c. I had seen so much of the same kind in Bristol, that I often wondered how God permitted it to stand; but London I found infinitely worse, and seriously trembled for fear the measure of iniquity was quite full, and that every hour would be its last. However, I at length concluded, that if London was a second Sodom, I was a second Lot; and these comfortable ideas reconciled me to the thoughts of living in it.

"I said, it was a wretched place,
Unfit for any child of grace;
'Tis ripe for judgment: Satan's seat,
The sink of sin, and hell complete;
In ev'ry street of trulls a troop,
And ev'ry cook-maid wears a hoop."

SOMERVILLE.

And some of Mr Wesley's people gave me great comfort by assuring me, that "the Lord had much people in this city:" which I soon discovered to be true, as I got acquainted with many of those righteous, chosen saints, who modestly arrogate to themselves that they are the peculiar favourites of heaven, and consequently that any place they reside in must be safe!

In a month I saved money sufficient to bring up my wife, and she had a tolerable state of health; of my master I obtained some stuff-shoes for her to bind, and nearly as much as she could do. Having now plenty of work and higher wages, we were tolerably easy in our circumstances, more so than ever we had been, so that we soon procured a few clothes. My wife had all her life before done very well with a superfine broad cloth cloak, but now I prevailed on her to have one of silk.

Until this winter I had never found out that I wanted a great coat, but now I made that important discovery.

" A winter garment now demands your care,
To guard the body from the inclement air;
Soft be the inward vest, the outward strong,
And large to wrap you warm, down reaching long."
COOKE's Hesiod.

My landlord shewed me one made of a coarse kind of Bath-coating, which he purchased new at a shop in Rosemary lane, for ten shillings and sixpence; so that the next half-guinea I had to spare, away I went to Rosemary lane, and (to my great surprise,) was hauled into a shop by a fellow who was walking up and down before the door of a slopseller, where I was soon fitted with a great-coat of the same sort as that of my landlord. I asked the price; but how great was my astonishment, when the honest shopman told me, that he was so taken with my clean, honest, industrious looks, that he would let me have it cheaper than he would his own brother, so in one word he would oblige me with it for five-and-twenty shillings, which was the very money that it cost him. On hearing this I crossed the shop in a trice, in order to set off home again, but the door had a fastening to it beyond my comprehension, nor would the good man let me out before I had made him an offer. I told him I had so little money about me that I could not offer anything, and again desired that he would let me out. But he persisted, and at last I told him that my landlord had informed me that he had purchased such another coat for ten shillings and sixpence; on which he began to give himself airs, and assured me that, however some people came by their goods, for his part, he always paid for his. I heartily wished myself out of the shop, but in vain, as he seemed determined not to part with me until I had made some offer. I then

told him that I had but ten shillings and sixpence, and of course could not offer him any more than I had got. I now expected more abuse from him, but instead of that the patient good man told me, that as he perhaps might get something by me another time, I should have the coat for my half-guinea, although it was worth more than double the money.

About the end of November I received an account of the death of my grandfather.

"The good old gentleman expir'd,
And decently to heav'n retir'd."

I was also informed that he had left a will in favour of my grandmother-in-law's relations, who became possessed of all his effects, except a small freehold estate, which he left to my youngest brother, because he happened to be called George, (which was the name of my grandfather,) and ten pounds a-piece to each of his other grand-children.

So totally unacquainted was I with the modes of transacting business, that I could not point out any method of having my ten pounds sent up to London, at least, no mode that the executor of the will would approve of; it being such a prodigious sum, that the greatest caution was used on both sides; so that it cost me about half the money in going down for it and in returning to town again. This was in extremely hard frosty weather, (I think some time in December,) and being on the outside of a stage-coach, I was so very cold, that when I came to the inn where the passengers dined, I went directly to the fire, which struck the cold inward, so that I had but a very narrow escape from instant death. This happened in going down. In returning back to town I had other misfortunes to encounter. The cold weather still continuing, I thought the basket warmer than the roof, and about six miles from Salisbury

I went back into it. But on getting out of it, in the inn yard at Salisbury, I heard some money jingle, and on searching my pockets, I discovered that I had lost about sixteen shillings, two or three of which I found in the basket, the rest had fallen through on the road; and no doubt the whole of what I had left of my ten pounds would have gone the same way, had I not (for fear of highwaymen) sewed it up in my clothes. I recollected that Seneca had said, "A wise and good man is proof against all accidents of fate; and that a brave man is a match for fortune;" and knowing myself to be both wise, good, and brave, I bore the loss of my silver with the temper of a Stoic; and, like Epictetus, reasoned, that I could not have lost it if I had not first had it; and that as I had lost it, why it was all the same as though it had never been in my possession.

But a more dreadful misfortune befell me the next morning; the extreme severe weather still continuing, in order to keep me from dying with cold, I drank some purl and gin, which (not being used to drink anything strong) made me so drunk, that the coachman put me inside the carriage for fear I should fall off the roof. I there met with some of the jovial sort, who had also drunk to keep out the cold, so that I found them in high glee: being asked to sing them a song, I immediately complied, and, forgetting that I was one of the holy brethren, I sung song for song with the merriest of them; only several times between the acts, I turned up the whites of my eyes, and uttered a few ejaculations, as "Lord forgive me!" "Oh Christ! what am I doing?" and a few more of the same pious sort.

> "The veriest hermit in the nation,
> May yield, God knows, to strong temptation." SWIFT.

However, after eating a good dinner, and refraining from liquor, I became nearly sober, and by the time I

arrived in town, quite so; though in a terrible agitation of mind, by reflecting on what I had done; and was so ashamed of the affair, that I concealed it from my wife, that I might not grieve her righteous soul with the knowledge of so dreadful a fall: so that she with great pleasure ripped open the places in my clothes, which contained my treasure, and with a heart full of gratitude, piously thanked Providence for affording us such a supply, and hoped that the Lord would enable us to make a good use of it.

"Whate'er can good or ill befall,
Faithful partner she of all." WESLEY's Melissa.

Here perhaps I may with great propriety quote the following lines of Gray:

"Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile.
The short and simple annals of the poor."

I am, dear friend, yours

LETTER XX.

" Thus dwelt poor ———, of few goods possest,
A bed, board, tankard, and six cups at best :
Item, Wesley's head, old books, and rotten chest ;
His bed was scant, for his short wife too short ;
His cups were earthen, all of smaller sort."

OWEN'S Juvenal.

" Fixt in an elbow chair at ease,
I choose companions as I please." SWIFT.

" Hail, precious pages! that amuse and teach,
Exalt the genius, and improve the breast.
A feast for ages. Oh thou banquet nice
Where the soul riots with secure excess.
What heartfelt bliss! What pleasure-winged hours !"

DR S. DAVIS.

DEAR FRIEND,

WITH the remainder of the money we purchased household goods; but as we then had not sufficient to furnish a room, we worked hard, and lived still harder, so that in a short time we had a room furnished with our own goods; and I believe that it is not possible for you to imagine with what pleasure and satisfaction we looked round the room and surveyed our property: I believe that Alexander the Great never reflected on his immense acquisitions with half the heartfelt enjoyment which we experienced on this capital attainment.

" How happy is the man whose early lot,
Hath made him master of a furnish'd cot!"

After our room was furnished, as we still enjoyed a better state of health than we did at Bristol and

Taunton, and had also more work and higher wages, we often added something or other to our stock of wearing apparel.

"Industrious habits in each bosom reign,
And industry begets a love of gain,
Hence all the good from opulence that springs."

GOLDSMITH.

Nor did I forget the old book-shops: but frequently added an old book to my small collection; and I really have often purchased books with the money that should have been expended in purchasing something to eat; a striking instance of which follows:

At the time we were purchasing household goods we kept ourselves very short of money, and on Christmas eve we had but half-a-crown left to buy a Christmas dinner. My wife desired that I would go to market and purchase this festival dinner, and off I set for that purpose; but in the way I saw an old book-shop, and I could not resist the temptation of going in; intending only to expend sixpence or ninepence out of my half-a-crown. But I stumbled upon Young's Night Thoughts—forgot my dinner—down went my half-crown—and I hastened home, vastly delighted with the acquisition. When my wife asked me where was our Christmas dinner, I told her it was in my pocket.—"In your pocket (said she); that is a strange place! How could you think of stuffing a joint of meat into your pocket?" I assured her that it would take no harm. But as I was in no haste to take it out, she began to be more particular, and enquired what I had got, &c. On which I began to harangue on the superiority of intellectual pleasures over sensual gratifications, and observed that the brute creation enjoyed the latter in a much higher degree than man. And that a man, that was not possessed of intellectual enjoyments, was but a two-legged brute.

I was proceeding in this strain: "And so, (said

she,) instead of buying a dinner, I suppose you have, as you have done before, being buying books with the money?"

"Pray what is the value of Newton or Locke?
Do they lessen the price of potatoes or corn?
When poverty comes, can they soften the shock,
Or teach us how hunger is patiently borne?
You spend half your life-time in poring on books;
What a mountain of wit must be cramm'd in that skull!
And yet, if a man were to judge by your looks,
Perhaps he would think you confoundedly dull."

I confessed I had bought Young's Night Thoughts "And I think (said I) that I have acted wisely; for had I bought a dinner we should have eaten it to-morrow, and the pleasure would have been soon over. but should we live fifty years longer, we shall have the Night Thoughts to feast upon." This was too powerful an argument to admit of any farther debate; in short, my wife was convinced. Down I sat, and began to read with as much enthusiasm as the good doctor possessed when he wrote it; and so much did it excite my attention as well as approbation, that I retained the greatest part of it in my memory. A couplet of Persius, as Englished, might have been applied to me:

"For this you gain your meagre looks,
And sacrifice your dinner to your books."

Sometime in June 1774, as we sat at work in our room, Mr Boyd, one of Mr Wesley's people, called and informed me that a little shop and parlour were to be let in Featherstone street, adding, that if I was to take it, I might there get some work as a master. I without hesitation told him that I liked the idea, and hinted that I would sell books also. Mr Boyd then asked me how I came to think of selling books? I informed him that until that moment it had never once entered into my thoughts; but that when he proposed my taking the shop it instantaneously oc-

curred to my mind, that for several months past I had observed a great increase in a certain old book shop; and that I was persuaded I knew as much of old books as the person who kept it. I farther observed, that I loved books, and that if I could but be a bookseller I should then have plenty of books to read, which was the greatest motive I could conceive to induce me to make the attempt. My friend on this assured me, that he would get the shop for me, and with a loud laugh added, "When you are lord mayor, you shall use all your interest to get me made an alderman." Which I engaged not to forget to perform.

"In all my wanderings round the world of care,
In all my grief—and God has giv'n my share—
I still had hopes to see some better days."

My private library at this time consisted of Fletchers's Checks to Antinomianism, &c. 5 volumes; Watts's Improvement of the Mind; Young's Night Thoughts; Wake's Translation of the Apostolical Epistles; Fleetwood's Life of Christ; the first twenty numbers of Hinton's Dictionary of the Arts and Sciences; some of Wesley's journals, and some of the pious lives published by him; and about a dozen other volumes of the latter sort, besides odd magazines, &c. And to set me up in style, Mr Boyd recommended me to the friends of a holy brother lately gone to heaven, and of whom I purchased a bagful of old books, chiefly divinity, for a guinea.

With this stock, and some odd scraps of leather, which, together with all my books, were worth about five pounds, I opened shop on Midsummer day 1774, in Featherstone street, in the parish of St Luke; and I was as well pleased in surveying my little shop with my name over it, as was Nebuchadnezzar, when he said, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" and my good wife often perceiving the pleasure that I took in my shop, piously cautioned me against set-

ting my mind on the riches of this world, and assured me that it was all but vanity. "You are very right, my dear, (I sometimes replied;) and to keep our minds as spiritual as we can, we will always attend our class and band meetings, hear as many sermons, &c. at the Foundery, on week days, as possible, and on sabbath days we will mind nothing but the good of our souls: our small beer shall be fetched in on Saturday nights, nor will we dress even a potatoe on the sabbath. We will still attend the preaching at five o'clock in the morning; at eight go to the prayer meeting; at ten to the public worship at the Foundery; hear Mr Perry at Cripplegate at two; be at the preaching at the Foundery at five; meet with the general society at six; meet in the united bands at seven, and again be at the prayer meeting at eight; and then come home, and read and pray by ourselves."

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XXI.

"——— Strange vicissitudes of human fate!
Still alt'ring, never in a steady state;
Good after ill, and after pain delight;
Alternate, like the scenes of day and night.
Since every one who lives is born to die,
And none can boast entire felicity:
With equal mind what happens let us bear,
Nor joy nor grieve too much for things beyond our care
Like pilgrims, to the appointed place we tend:
The world's an inn, and death's the journey's end."

DRYDEN's Palemon and Arcite.

DEAR FRIEND,

NOTWITHSTANDING the obscurity of the street, and the mean appearance of my shop, yet I soon found

customers for what few books I had, and I as soon laid out the money in other old trash, which was daily brought for sale.

At that time Mr Wesley's people had a sum of money which was kept on purpose to lend out, for three months, without interest, to such of their society whose characters were good, and who wanted a temporary relief. To increase my little stock, I borrowed five pounds out of this fund, which was of great service to me.

In our new situation we lived in a very frugal manner, often dining on potatoes, and quenching our thirst with water, being absolutely determined, if possible, to make some provision for such dismal times as sickness, shortness of work, &c., which we had been so frequently involved in before, and could scarcely help expecting to be our fate again. My wife foreboded it much more than I did, being of a more melancholy turn of mind.

"———————— Women ever love
To brood o'er sorrows, and indulge their woe."
FRANCKLIN's Sophocles.

I lived in this street six months, and in that time increased my stock from five pounds to twenty-five pounds.

"London——the public there are candid and generous, and before my merit can have time to create me enemies, I'll save money, and a fig for the Sultan and Sophy."—ROVER.

This immense stock I deemed too valuable to be buried in Featherstone street; and a shop and parlour being to let in Chiswell street, No 46, I took them. This was at that time, and for fourteen years afterwards, a very dull and obscure situation; as few ever passed through it besides Spitalfields weavers on hanging days, and Methodists on preaching nights; but still it was much better adapted for business than Featherstone street.

A short time after I came into Chiswell street to live, an odd circumstance occurred, which caused a great deal of talk; Mrs Chapman, who many years kept a livery stable in Coleman street, had a cat big with kitten; this cat was one day seen to fly at a fowl that was roasting by the fire, which she repeated several times, so that she was at last put out of the room; when this fowl was dressed and eaten they gave poor pussy the bones; but this was not enough, for when she lay in, they found that she had marked her kitten, as instead of two feet before, she had two wings with some short feathers on them. The singularity of this kitten drew great numbers to visit her, which occasioned so much trouble to Mrs Chapman, that she signed the death-warrant, and poor puss was drowned, and afterwards buried in the dung heap.

I thought this story would read as well in my Life as in the Philosophical Transactions, which prevented me from troubling those learned authors with it.

A few weeks after I came into this street I bade a final adieu to the gentle craft, and converted my little stock of leather, &c. into old books; and a great sale I had, considering my stock, which was not only extremely small, but contained very little variety, as it principally consisted of divinity; for as I had not much knowledge, so I seldom ventured out of my depth. Indeed, there was one class of books, which for the first year or two that I called myself a bookseller, I would not sell; for such was my ignorance, bigotry, superstition, (or what you please,) that I conscientiously destroyed such books as fell into my hands which were written by free-thinkers; for really supposing them to be dictated by his sable highness, I would neither read them myself nor sell them to others.

You will perhaps be surprised when I inform you, that there are in London (and I suppose in other populous places) persons who purchase every article which they have occasion for (and also many articles

which they have no occasion for, nor ever will) at stalls, beggarly shops, pawnbrokers, &c., under the idea of purchasing cheaper than they could at respectable shops, and of men of property. A considerable number of these kind of customers I had in the beginning, who forsook my shop as soon as I began to appear more respectable, by introducing better order, possessing more valuable books, and having acquired a better judgment, &c. Notwithstanding which, I declare to you, upon my honour, that these very bargain-hunters have given me double the price that I now charge for thousands and tens of thousands of volumes. For, as a tradesman increases in respectability and opulence, his opportunities of purchasing increase proportionably, and the more he buys and sells, the more he becomes a judge of the real value of his goods. It was for want of the experience and judgment, stock, &c., that for several years I was in the habit of charging more than double the price I do for many thousand articles. But professed bargain-hunters often purchase old locks at the stalls in Moorfields, when half the wards are rusted off or taken out, and give more for them than they would have paid for new ones to any reputable ironmonger. And what numerous instances of this infatuation do we meet with daily at sales by auction, not of books only, but of many other articles, of which I could here adduce a variety of glaring instances: but (not to tire you) a few of recent date shall suffice. At the sale of Mr Rigby's books at Mr Christie's, Martyn's Dictionary of Natural History sold for fifteen guineas, which then stood in my catalogue at four pounds fifteen shillings; Pilkington's Dictionary of Painters at seven guineas, usually sold at three; Francis's Horace two pounds eleven shillings, and many others in the same manner. At sir George Colebrook's sale, the octavo edition of the Tatler sold for two guineas and a half. At a sale a few weeks since, Rapin's History, in folio, the two

first volumes only, (instead of five,) sold for upwards of five pounds! I charge for the same from ten shillings and sixpence to one pound ten shillings. I sell great numbers of books to pawnbrokers, who sell them out of their windows at much higher prices, the purchasers believing that they are buying bargains, and that such articles have been pawned; and it is not only books that pawnbrokers purchase, but various other matters, and they always purchase the worst kind of every article they sell. I will even add, that many shops which are called pawnbrokers, never take in any pawn, yet can live by selling things which are supposed to be kept over time.

I went on prosperously until some time in September 1775, when I was suddenly taken ill of a dreadful fever; and, eight or ten days after, my wife was seized with the same disorder.

> "Human hopes, now mounting high,
> On the swelling surge of joy;
> Now with unexpected woe,
> Sinking to the depths below." WEST's Pindar.

At that time I kept only a boy to help in my shop, so that I fear, while I lay ill, my wife had too much care and anxiety on her mind. I have been told that, before she was confined to her bed, she walked about in a delirious state; in which she did not long continue, but contrary to all expectation died, in a fit of enthusiastic rant, on the ninth of November, surrounded by several methodistical preachers.

> "Invidious death! how dost thou rend in sunder
> Whom love has knit and sympathy made one?
> A tie so stubborn."—— BLAIR's Grave.

She was in reality one of the best of women; and although for about four years she was ill the greatest part of the time, which involved me in the very depth of poverty and distress, yet I never once repented having married her.

——" Still busy meddling memory,
In barbarous succession, musters up
The past endearments of our softer hours,
Tenacious of his theme." BLAIR's Grave.

'Tis true she was enthusiastical to an extreme, and of course very superstitious and visionary, but as I was very far gone myself, I did not think that a fault in her.

" Go, take thy seat the heav'nly choirs among,
But leave thy virtues to the world below."
ORLANDO FURIOSO.

Indeed she much exceeded me, and most others that ever fell under my observation, as she in reality totally neglected and disregarded every kind of pleasure whatever, but those of a spiritual (or visionary) nature. Methinks I here see you smile: but I assure you she made *no* exception; but was a complete devotee, and what is more remarkable, without pride or ill-nature.

" Intentions so pure, and such meekness of spirit,
Must of course, and of right, heaven's kingdom inherit."
SIMKIN.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XXII.

" I've strange news to give you! but when you receive it
'Tis impossible, sir, that you should believe it!
But as I've been told this agreeable story,
I'll digress for a moment to lay it before ye."

DEAR SIR,

A FRIEND of mine, of whose veracity I entertain the highest opinion, has favoured me with an account

of a lady who has to the full as much, indeed more of the spirit, but without the good-nature of Nancy Lackington. The fact is as follows:

"'Tis true 'tis pity: and pity 'tis it's true."

Mr R—t, a genteel tradesman with whom I am acquainted, having lost his second wife early in 1790, courted and married one of the holy sisters a few months afterwards. They had lived together about six months, when Mr R—t, one Sunday, being a sober religious man, took down Doddridge's Lectures, and began to read them to his wife and family. But this holy sister found fault with her husband for reading such learned rational discourses, which savoured too much of human reason and vain philosophy, and wished he would read something more spiritual and edifying. He attempted to convince her that Dr Doddridge was not only a good rational divine, but to the full as spiritual as any divine ought to be; and that to be more spiritual he must be less rational, and of course become fanatical and visionary. But these observations of the husband so displeased his spiritual wife, that she retired to bed, and left her husband to read Doddridge's Lectures as long as he chose to his children by a former wife.

The next morning, while Mr R—t was out on business, this holy sister, without saying one syllable to any person, packed up all her clothes, crammed them into a hackney-coach, and away she went. Mr R—t, poor soul! on coming home, discovered his immense loss, and in an almost frantic state, spent the first fortnight in fruitless attempts to discover her retreat.

"Three weeks after her elopement, I was (says Mr R—t) going down Cheapside one day, and saw a lady something like my wife, but as she was somewhat disguised, and I could not see her face, I was not sure. At last I ventured to look under her bonnet, and found that, sure enough, it was she. I then walked three times backwards and forwards in Cheap-

side, endeavouring to persuade her to return with me, or to discover where she lived; but she obstinately refused to return, or to let me see her retreat; and here (says Mr R—t) I begged that she would grant me a kiss, but she would not willingly. However, after some bustle in the street, I took a farewell kiss. Poor dear soul! (sighed he) she is rather *too spiritual*; for notwithstanding I laid by her side near six months, she would never be prevailed upon to do anything carnal; and although I did all in my power to get the better of her spiritual scruples, yet she was always so in love with Christ her heavenly spouse, that when she eloped from me she was, I assure you, as good a virgin as when I married her."

I must give you a story or two of the same nature with the preceding.

A gentleman of London, happening to be on a visit at Bristol about three years since, fell in love with a handsome young lady who was one of the holy sisterhood; after a few weeks' acquaintance he made her an offer of his person and fortune; and the young lady, after proper inquiry had been made into the gentleman's family, fortune, &c., consented to make our lover happy. They were soon after married, and the same day set off in a post-chaise towards London, in order to sleep the first night at an inn, and so save the lady the blushes occasioned by the jokes common on such occasions; this happy couple had been in bed about an hour, when the cry of murder alarmed the house; this alarm proceeding from the room that was occupied by the bride and bridegroom, drew the company that way; the inn-keeper knocked at the door and demanded admittance; our Benedict appeared at the door, and informed the host that his lady had been suddenly ill, in a kind of fit, he believed, but that she was better; and after the inn-keeper's wife had been sent into the room to see the young lady, and had found her well, all retired to bed.

They had however not lain more than two hours, when the cry of murder, fire, &c., again alarmed the house, and drew many out of their beds once more.

Our young gentleman then dressed himself, and opening the door, informed the company that he had that morning been married to the young lady in bed, and that being married, he had insisted on being admitted to the privilege of a husband, but that the young lady had talked much about the good of her poor soul, her spiritual husband, &c., and that instead of granting what he conceived to be the right of every husband, she had thought proper to disturb all in the house. He added, that having been thus made very ridiculous, he would take effectual care to prevent a repetition of the same absurd conduct.

He then ordered a post-chaise, and set off for London, leaving our young saint in bed, to enjoy her spiritual contemplations in their full extent; nor has he ever since paid her any attention.

Some time since, being in a large town in the West, she was pointed out to me by a friend, as she was walking in the street.

I am also informed, from undoubted authority, that in the same town there are a couple who have been married upwards of three years, and as yet the husband is not certain as to the sex of his wife; and on every attempt of the husband for that purpose, the servants are alarmed with the screams of the pious lady, who would not permit such carnal communication for the world.

The preceding stories put me in mind of what Ovid says was practised by young maids on the festival of the celebrated nymph Anna Perenna, thus translated by I know not whom:

> "With promises the amorous god she led,
> And with fond hopes his eager passion fed;
> At length 'tis done, the goddess yields, she cry'd;
> My prayers have gain'd the victory o'er pride.

With joy the god prepares the golden bed;—
Thither, her face conceal'd, is Anna led:
Just on the brink of bliss she stands confess'd:—
The disappointed lover is her jest,
While rage and shame alternate swell his breast.'

I know that there are now in Mr Wesley's society, in London, some women who, ever since they were converted, have refused to sleep with their husbands, and that some of those will not pay the least attention to any temporal concern whatever, being, as they term it, wholly wrapped up in divine contemplation, having their souls absorbed in divine love, so as not to be interrupted by the trifling concerns of a husband, family, &c.

Mrs G——— left her husband and children, one of whom was sucking at her breast, and came from Ireland to London; and when she was upbraided with her unnatural behaviour, she replied, It was the will of the Lord, she had left all for Christ's sake and followed the guidings of his spirit. To sit undet the preaching of Mr Wesley was of more importance to her than husband and children. For a long time she lived on what she had brought away from her husband; after that was gone, she lived a half-starved life, by taking in plain-work. What became of her at last, I could never learn.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XXIII.

" Women that leave no stone unturn'd,
In which the cause might be concern'd."

HUDIBRAS.

" The man without sin, the Methodist rabbi,
Has perfectly cur'd the chloroiss of Tabby :
And if right I can judge from her shape and face,
She soon may produce an infant of grace.
Now they say that all people in her situation
Are very fine subjects for regeneration."

NEW BATH GUIDE.

DEAR FRIEND,

BECAUSE some of the holy sisters are in their amours altogether spiritual, you are by no means to understand that they are all totally divested of the carnal propensity.

Some of these good creatures are so far from thinking that their husbands are too carnal in their affections, that they really think that they are not enough so; and instances are not wanting, in which, owing to their having husbands too spiritual, they have been willing to receive assistance from the husbands of other women.

It is but about a year since a certain celebrated preacher used to administer carnal consolation to the wife of his clerk. This holy communication was repeated so often, and so open, that at last it came to the clerk's ears, who, watching an opportunity, one day surprised the pious pair at their *devotion*, and so belaboured the preacher with his walking staff, that the public were for near a month deprived of the benefits resulting from his remarkable gift of eloquence.

" The pious Methodist may chance to fail,
Like Æsop's fox, entangled by the tail."

As I am in the story-telling way, I cannot resist the temptation of telling another; for, as Mat Bramble says,

"——— Here my subject is not barren;
But in rare anecdotic matter rich."

A certain holy sister who lately kept a house in a country village, within ten miles of London, *took in* (as they called it) Mr Wesley's preachers; by taking in, is only meant, that when they came in their turn to preach in the village, she used to supply each with victuals and a bed: (no doubt but they slept alone.) This lady was so very remarkable for her spiritual experience and divine gifts, that she attracted many to her house, besides such as came in the regular course of their duty, and among the former a preacher from London, from whom I learnt the affair. This preacher, happening to want a wife, and being very spiritually-minded, actually married her, in December 1790, merely for her great gifts and grace, as her fortune was not above the fiftieth part as much as his own; and as to person, she is scarcely one degree above ugliness itself; although her husband is well-proportioned, and upon the whole a handsome man. They had been married a week, when this simple preacher discovered that his gifted gracious saint was an incarnate devil, who had married him only to rob, plunder, and ——— him.

"Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best
Seeming at first all heav'nly under virgin veil,
Soft, modest, meek, demure,
Once join'd, the contrary she proves, a thorn
Intestine, far within defensive arms
A cleaving mischief; in his way to virtue
Adverse and turbulent, or by her charms
Draws him away enslav'd
With dotage, and his sense deprav'd,
To folly and shameful deeds which ruin ends."
MILTON'S Sampson Agonistes.

And in a few months, between her and her gallants, they bullied him out of a settlement to the amount of four times the sum she brought him, and the poor pious preacher thinks that he has cheaply got rid of her.

" Ah, foolish woman! may she one day see
How deep she's plung'd herself in infamy,
And with true penitence wash out the stain;——
But—mischief on't—why should I pray in vain?
For she's but harden'd at the name of grace,
No blush was ever seen t'adorn her face." GOULD.

The reason why I interest myself in his behalf, is because I am confident that he really is an honest well-meaning man at the bottom; but withal one that does not possess the greatest share of understanding, and who being formerly but a mean mechanic, never had any education; but although he is a great enthusiast, yet he is one of the good-natured inoffensive sort, who will do no harm to any person, but on the contrary, all the good in his power. I am only sorry, as he lately was an honest useful tradesman, that he should have so much spiritual quixotism in him, as at thirty years of age to shut up his shop and turn preacher, without being able to read his primer; which I can assure you is the case.

" What though his wits could ne'er dispense
One page of grammar, or of sense;
What though his learning be so slight,
He scarcely knows to spell or write;
What though his skull be cudgel proof,
He's orthodox, and that's enough."—TOM BRAINLESS.

But as these heavenly teachers only speak as the Spirit giveth utterance, of course all human learning is entirely superfluous.

" —— As he does not chuse to cull
His faith by any scripture rule;
But by the vapours that torment
His brain, from hypochondria sent,

Which into dreams and visions turn,
And make his zeal so fiercely burn,
That reason loses the ascendant,
And all within grows independant.
He proves all such as do accord
With him the chosen of the Lord;
But that all others are accurst,
'Tis plain in Canticles the first."

BUTLER'S Posth. Works.

A few years since the Methodist preachers got footing in Wellington (the famous birth-place of your humble servant) and established a society; soon after which one of their preachers (at Collompton, a neighbouring town) happened to like a young servant girl, who was one of the holy sisters, (she having gone through the new birth,) better than his wife, because she was an unenlightened unconverted woman. And this servant girl proving with child, the news soon reached Wellington; and a very wealthy gentleman, who entertained the preachers there, followed the preacher of Collompton's example, and got his own pious maid with child.

" Blessed she tho' once rejected,
Like a little wandering sheep;
Poor maid, one morning was elected
By a vision in her sleep."

After this some of the society in Wellington began to have all things in common, and several more of the holy sisters proved prolific; which so alarmed the parish, that some of the heads of it insisted that the preachers should not be permitted to preach there any longer. " For if," said they, " the Methodist society continues, we shall have the parish full of bastards."

A similar affair happened at a country town, ten or twelve miles from Oxford, about two years since, where a very handsome powerful preacher made converts of a great number of women, both married and

single, who were wonderfully affected, and great numbers flocked to his standard.

" He had a roguish twinkle in his eye,
And shone all glittering with ungodly dew,
If a tight damsel chanc'd to trippen by;
Which when observ'd, he shrunk into his mew,
And straight would recollect his piety anew."

CASTLE OF INDOLENCE.

But he had not laboured there more than a year, before the churchwardens were made acquainted with his powerful operations on five young female saints, who all swore bastards to this holy, spiritual labourer in the vineyard; upon which the gentlemen of the town exerted themselves, and prevented the farther propagation of Methodism; as

" The ladies by sympathy seem'd to discover
The advantage of having a spiritual lover.
They were sadly afraid that wives, widows, and misses,
Would confine to the —— all their favours and kisses."

There was in Salisbury, some few years ago, a congregation of Methodists in connection with the late Mr Wesley; and amongst the poorer members, a young man, who with honourable professions paid his addresses to a young woman. They generally met in the dusk of the evening, after their daily labour was ended. One evening in particular he pressed her to marry him; it was mutually agreed on, and the day fixed for the celebration of their nuptials; and by way of binding the bargain (odd as it may seem) he presented the young woman with half a guinea. A few evenings after, being in company with her as usual, he began to offer rudeness to her; alleging in excuse, that as they were to be married in a few days, the congress would be perfectly innocent. But the girl resented the usage highly; and soon after complained to the other Methodists in that city of the insult she had received

from him. The young man was accordingly challenged with it; but he stiffly denied the whole; alleging that he had not been in her company for some time past; that he had made no matrimonial contract with her; and consequently did not give her the half-guinea as asserted; and the men who usually worked with him in the same shop averred positively that he was present with them on the evening in question, at his usual employment. Upon this, the Methodists wisely concluded, that it must have been the devil who had carried on this affair with the young woman, that when he gave her the half-guinea she had sold herself to him, and that on the day fixed for the marriage he would come and fetch her away; or at least that some great evil would befall her: and as Mr Wesley was to be at Newbury soon, they prudently determined upon sending a deputation of certain of their members to him for his advice in so critical an affair; which was accordingly done. After having stated the case to him, instead of opening their eyes, as so learned a man ought to have done, he treated the whole as truth, and directed them to fast and pray on that day when they expected Satan to make his appearance; and after the deputies had left Newbury, he said to the good people of the house where he then was, "I thought a little fasting and prayer would not do them any harm."

The author of a letter to Dr Coke and Mr More, published since the first edition of my Memoirs, informs us that a gentleman of Chesham had a daughter about seventeen years of age, whom he put into the hands of a Methodist parson, to have her converted, and was exceedingly kind and liberal to him; and we are informed that this rascal converted her first, and debauched her afterwards.

So you see, my dear friend, by the above examples (were it necessary, I could give you many more) that not all the converted and sanctified females are become so absorbed in the spiritual delights of the

mystical union, as to have lost all relish for carnal connections; as we find that many among them are blessed with a mind so capacious, as to be able to participate in the pleasures of both worlds.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XXIV.

" Domestic happiness, thou only bliss
Of paradise that has surviv'd the fall!
Thou art the nurse of virtue, in thine arms
She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,
Heav'n born and destin'd for the skies again."

COWPER.

" Woman! man's chiefest good, by heav'n design'd
To glad the heart, and humanize the mind;
To sooth each angry care, abate the strife,
And lull the passions as we walk through life."

ART OF LIVING IN LONDON.

DEAR FRIEND,

AFTER a long digression I must now return to my own affairs.

I continued in the above-mentioned dreadful fever many weeks, and my life was despaired of by all that came near me. During which time, my wife, whom I affectionately loved, died and was buried, without my once having a sight of her. What added much to my misfortunes, several nurses that were hired to take care of me and my wife, proved so abandoned and depraved as to have lost all sense of moral obligation, and every tender feeling for one who to all appearance was just on the point of death: several of these monsters in female shape robbed my drawers of linen, &c.,

and kept themselves drunk with gin, while I lay unable to move in my bed, and was ready to perish, partly owing to want of cleanliness and proper care. Thus situated, I must inevitably have fallen a victim, had it not been for my sister Dorothy, wife of Mr Northam of Lambeth, and my sister Elizabeth, wife of Mr Bell in Soho.

" ——————— Dreadful are the ills
Which cruel fortune brings on human kind."
FRANCKLIN's Sophocles.

These kind sisters, as soon as they were informed of the deplorable state in which I lay, notwithstanding some misunderstanding which subsisted between us, and prevented me from sending for them, hastened to me, and each sat up with me alternately, so that I had one or the other with me every night; and, contrary to all expectation, I recovered. But this recovery was in a very slow manner.

As soon as I was able to enquire into the state of my affairs, I found that Mr Wheeler, sack and rope-maker in Old street, and Messrs Bottomly and Shaw, carpenters and sash-makers in Bunhill row, had saved me from ruin, by locking up my shop, which contained my little *all*. Had not this been done, the nurses would no doubt have contrived means to have emptied my shop, as effectually as they had done my drawers.

The above gentlemen not only took care of my shop, but also advanced money to pay such expences as occurred; and as my wife was dead, they assisted in making my will in favour of my mother.

These worthy gentlemen belong to Mr Wesley's society (and notwithstanding they have imbibed many enthusiastic whims) yet would they be an honour to any society, and are a credit to human nature. I hope that I never shall recollect their kindness without being filled with the warmest sentiments of gratitude towards them.

I never had any opportunity of returning Mr Wheeler's kindness; but Messrs Bottomly and Shaw have had many hundred pounds of me for work, and are still my carpenters, and ever shall be as long as I shall live near them, and have a house to repair

"He that hath nature in him must be grateful:
'Tis the Creator's primary great law,
That links the chain of being to each other,
Joining the greater to the lesser nature,
Trying the weak and strong, the poor and powerful,
Subduing men to brutes, and even brutes to men."

There is fine passage in Ajax, a tragedy by Sophocles, as translated by Dr Francklin, and as it is a wife speaking to her husband is the more remarkable. Tecmessa says to Ajax—

——————"Thou art my all,
My only safeguard: do not, do not leave me!
Nought so becomes a man as gratitude
For good received, and noble deeds are still
The offspring of benevolence, whilst he
With whom remembrance dies of blessings past,
Is vile and worthless."

On my recovery I also learnt that Miss Dorcas Turton (the young woman that kept the house, and of whom I then rented the shop, parlour, kitchen, and garret) having out of kindness to my wife occasionally assisted her during her illness, had caught the same dreadful disorder, she was then very dangerously ill, and people shunned the house as much as if the plague had been in it. So that when I opened my shop again, I was stared at as though I had actually returned from the other world; and it was a considerable time before many of my former customers could credit that I really was in existence, it having been repeatedly reported that I was also dead.

Montaigne says, "That sorrow is a passion which the world has endeavoured to honour, by clothing it with the goodly titles of wisdom, virtue, &c., which is

a foolish and vile disguise; the Italians call it by its proper name, ill-nature, for in truth (says he) it is always a mean base passion; and for that reason the Stoics forbad their wise men to be any way affected with it."

Whether Montaigne be right or not, I will not determine; but I got rid of my sorrow as fast as I could, thinking that I could not give a better proof of my having loved my former wife, than by getting another as soon as I could.

"Man may be happy, if he will,
I've said so often, and I think so still:
Doctrine to make the millions stare!
Know then, each mortal is an actual Jove;
Can brew what weather he shall most approve,
Or wind, or calm, or foul, or fair.

But here's the mischief—man's an ass I say;
Too fond of thunder, light'ning, storm, and rain;
He hides the charming, cheering ray,
That spreads a smile, o'er hill and plain!
Dark he must court the skull, and spade, and shroud,
The mistress of his soul must be a cloud!"

PETER PINDAR.

Miss Dorcas Turton was a charming young woman, and you must now be made farther acquainted with her. She is the daughter of Mr Samuel Turton of Staffordshire; her mother by marriage still retained her maiden name, which was Miss Jemima Turton of Oxfordshire, grand-daughter of the honourable sir John Turton, knight, one of the judges of the Court of King's Bench. Mr Samuel Turton had a large fortune of his own, and about twenty thousand pounds with his wife Miss Jemima, but by law suits, and an unhappy turn for gaming, he dissipated nearly the whole of it, and was obliged to have recourse to trade to help to support his family.

"'Tis lost at dice, what ancient honour won
Hard, when the father plays away the son.

He opened a shop as a sadler's ironmonger; but as he was but little acquainted with trade, and as his old propensity to gaming never quitted him, it is no wonder that he did not succeed in his business; and to crown all his other follies, he was bound for a false friend in a large sum: this completed his ruin.

His wife died in January 1773, and his final ruin ensued a few months after; so that from that time to his death he was partly supported by his daughter Miss Dorcas Turton, who cheerfully submitted to keep a school, and worked very hard at plain work, by which means she kept her father from want.

"The worst of ills to poverty allied,
Is the proud scoff: it hurts man's honest pride."

OWEN'S Juvenal.

The old gentleman died a few months after I came into the shop. Being partly acquainted with this young lady's goodness to her father, I concluded that so amiable a daughter was very likely to make a good wife; I also knew that she was immoderately fond of books, and would frequently read until morning; this turn of mind in her was the greatest of all recommendations to me, who having acquired a few ideas, was at that time restless to increase them: so that I was in raptures with the bare thoughts of having a woman to read with, and also to read to me.

"Of all the pleasures, noble and refin'd,
Which form the taste and cultivate the mind,
In ev'ry realm where science darts its beams,
From Thale's ice, to Afric's golden streams,
From climes where Phœbus pours his orient ray,
To the fair regions of declining day,
The 'Feast of Reason,' which from READING springs,
To reas'ning man the highest solace brings.
'Tis books a lasting pleasure can supply,
Charm while we live, and teach us how to die."

LACKINGTON'S Shop-bill.

I embraced the first opportunity after her recovery to make her acquainted with my mind, and as we were no strangers to each others' characters and circumstances, there was no need of a long formal courtship; so I prevailed on her not to defer our union longer than the 30th of January 1776, when for the second time I entered into the holy state of matrimony.

"——— Wedded love is founded on esteem,
Which the fair merits of the mind engage:
For those are charms that never can decay,
But time, which gives new whiteness to the swan,
Improves their lustre." FENTON.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XXV.

"Reason re-baptiz'd me when adult:
Weigh'd true from false, in her impartial scale.
Truth, radient goddess! sallies on my soul!
And puts delusion's dusky train to flight." YOUNG.

"All the mystic lights were quench'd." LEE.

"To thee philosophy! to thee the light,
The guide of mortals through their mental night,
By whom the world in all its views is shown,
Our guide through nature's works, and in our own,
Who place in order being's wond'rous chain,
Save where those puzzling, stubborn links remain
By art divine involv'd, which man can ne'er explain.
CRABBE.

DEAR FRIEND,

I AM now in February 1776, arrived at an important period of my life. Being lately recovered from a very

painful, dangerous, and hopeless illness, I found myself once more in a confirmed state of health, surrounded by my little stock in trade, which was but just saved from thieves, and which to me was an immense treasure.

"Pass some fleeting moments by,
All at once the tempests fly;
Instant shifts the clouded scene;
Heav'n renews its smiles serene." WEST's Pindar.

Add to the above, my having won a second time in a game where the odds were so much against me; or, to use another simile, my having drawn another prize in the lottery of wedlock, and thus, like John Buncle, repaired the loss of one very valuable woman by the acquisition of another still more valuable.

"O woman! let the libertine decry,
Rail at the virtuous love he never felt,
Nor wish'd to feel.—Among the sex there are
Numbers as greatly good as they are fair;
Where rival virtues strive which brightens most,
Beauty the smallest excellence they boast;
Where all unite substantial bliss to prove,
And give mankind in them a taste of joys above."

HAYWARD.

Dr Watts, in his poem entitled Few Happy Matches, supposes that souls come forth in pairs, male and female, and that the reason why there are so many unhappy matches, is occasioned by many souls losing their partners in the way to this lower world. That the happy matches take place when souls arrive safely, and meeting again instinctively, impel the bodies they animate towards each other, so as to produce a hymeneal union. So that, according to the good doctor's hypothesis, it must be very dangerous indeed for a person to be married more than once; but perhaps such cases as mine might be exceptions to the general rule, and three souls might come out together,

but how very fortunate was I to meet with both my partners!

Reflecting on the above united circumstances, I found in my heart an unusual sensation, such as until then I had been a stranger to, and something within me adopted the sentiments of Anacreon, when he said,

> "Hence, sorrows, hence, nor rudely dare
> Disturb my transien span;
> Be mine to live (adieu to care)
> As cheerful as I can."

My mind began to expand, intellectual light and pleasure broke in and dispelled the gloom of fanatical melancholy; the sourness of my natural temper, which had been much increased by superstition, (called by Swift, "the spleen of the soul,") in part gave way, and was succeeded by cheerfulness and some degree of good-nature.

> "As when a wretch from thick polluted air,
> And dungeon-horrors by kind fate discharg'd,
> Climbs some fair eminence, where æther pure
> Surrounds him, and Elysian prospects rise;
> His heart exults, his spirits cast their load;
> As if new-born he triumphs in the change." YOUNG.

It was in one of these cheerful moods that I one day took up the 'Life of John Buncle;' and it is impossible for my friend to imagine with what eagerness and pleasure I read through the whole four volumes of this whimsical, sensible, and pleasing work; it was written by Thomas Amory, esq., (who was living in the year 1788, at the great age of ninety-seven), and I know not of any work more proper to be put into the hands of a poor, ignorant, bigoted, superstitious Methodist; but the misfortune is, that scarcely one of them will read anything but what suits with their own narrow notions, so that they shut themselves up in darkness and exclude every ray of intellectual light; which puts me in mind of the enthusiasts on the banks of the Ganges, who will not look at anything

beyond the tip of their noses. By the time I had gone through the last volume,

"My soul had took its freedom up." GREEN.

John Buncle's merry life puts me in mind of Peter Pindar's sensible, whimsical lines.

"Who told man that he must be curs'd on earth?
The God of Nature? No such thing!
Heav'n whisper'd him, the moment of his birth,
Don't cry, my lad, but dance and sing;
Don't be too wise, and be an ape:
In colours let the soul be dress'd, not crape.

"Roses shall smooth life's journey, and adorn;
Yet mind me if, through want of grace,
Thou mean'st to fling the blessing in my face,
Thou hast full leave to tread upon a thorn.
Yet some there are, of men I think the worst,
Poor imps! unhappy if they can't be curs'd;
For ever brooding over mis'ry's eggs,
As though life's pleasure were a deadly sin;
Mousing for ever for a gin
To catch their happiness by the legs."

I also received great benefits from reading Coventry's Philemon to Hydaspes; it consists of dialogues on false religion, extravagant devotion, &c., in which are many very curious remarks on visionaries of various ages and sects. This work is complete in five parts octavo. There has also been a decent Scotch edition, published in twelves, both editions are now rather scarce.

I now began to enjoy many innocent pleasures and recreations in life, without the fear of being eternally damned for a laugh, a joke, or for spending a sociable evening with a few friends, going to the playhouse, &c. &c.

——"The hours so spent shall live,
Not unapplauded in the book of heav'n,

For dear and precious as the moments are
Permitted man, they are not all for deeds
Of active virtue, give we none to vice,
And heav'n will not reparation ask
For many a summer's day and winter's eve,
So spent as best amuses us.
We trifle all, and he that best deserves,
Is but a trifler,—'tis a trifling world."

VILLAGE CURATE.

In short, I saw that true religion was no way incompatible with, or an enemy to rational pleasures of any kind. As life (says one) is the gift of heaven, it is religion to enjoy it.

" Fools by excess make varied pleasure pall,
The wise man's moderate, and enjoys them all."

VOLTAIRE, by Francklin.

I now also began to read with great pleasure the rational and moderate divines of all denominations: and a year or two after I began with metaphysics, in the intricate, though pleasing labyrinths of which I have occasionally since wandered, nor am I ever likely to find my way out.

" Like a guide in a mist have I rambled about,
And now come at last where at first I set out;
And unless for new light we have reason to hope,
In darkness it must be my fortune to grope."

I am not in the least uneasy on that head, as I have no doubt of being in my last moments able to adopt the language of one of the greatest men that ever existed.

" Great God, whose being by thy works is known,
Hear my last words from thy eternal throne:
If I mistook, 'twas while thy law I sought,
I may have err'd, but thou wert in each thought
Fearless I look beyond the opening grave,
And cannot think the God who being gave,
The God whose favours made my bliss o'erflow,
Has doom'd me, after death, to endless woe."

In the meantime I can sincerely adopt the following lines of Mr Pope:

"If I am right, thy grace impart,
Still in the right to stay;
If I am wrong, O teach my heart
To find the better way."

Having begun to think rationally, and reason freely on religious matters, you may be sure I did not long remain in Mr Wesley's society. No,

"A ray of welcome light disclosed my path!
Joyful I left the shadowy realms of death,
And hail'd the op'ning glories of the sky.
BOYD'S Dante's Inferno.

What is remarkable, I well remember that some years before, Mr Wesley told his society in Broadmead, Bristol, in my hearing, that he could never keep a bookseller six months in his flock (all fanatics are enemies to reason). He was then pointing out the danger that attended close reasoning in matters of religion and spiritual concerns, in reading controversies, &c. At that time I had not the least idea of my ever becoming a bookseller; but I no sooner began to give scope to my reasoning faculties, than the above remarkable assertion occurred to my mind.

But that which rather hastened my departure from Methodism was this:—The Methodist preachers were continually reprobating the practice of masters and mistresses keeping servants at home on Sundays, to dress dinners, which prevented them from hearing the word of God (by the word of God they mean their own jargon of nonsense); assuring them if the souls of such servants were damned, they might in a great measure lay their damnation at the doors of such masters and mistresses, who rather than eat a cold dinner, would be guilty of breaking the sabbath, and risking the souls of their servants. But how great was my surprise on discovering that these very men

who were continually preaching up fasting, abstinence, &c., to their congregations, and who wanted others to dine off cold dinners, or eat bread and cheese, &c., would themselves not even *sup* without roasted fowls, &c.

This I found to be fact, as I several times had occasion, after attending the preaching, to go into the kitchen behind the old Foundery (which at that time was Mr Wesley's preaching-house); there I saw women who had been kept from hearing the sermon, &c., they being employed in roasting fowls, and otherwise providing good suppers for the preachers.

"A cart-load, lo, their stomachs steal,
Yet swear they cannot make a meal!"

"So," said I, "you lay burthens on other men's shoulders, but will not so much as touch them yourselves with one of your fingers."

A ridiculous instance of the same nature happened also some years since at Taunton. One of Mr Wesley's preachers, whose name was Cotterell, assured his congregation from time to time, that every baker that baked meat on Sundays would be damned, and every person who partook of such meat would also be damned; on which a poor baker shut up his oven on Sundays; the consequence was, that he lost his customers, as such bakers as baked their victuals on Sunday had their custom on other days, so that the poor baker's family was nearly reduced to the workhouse; when one Sunday passing before the door where he knew the preacher was to dine, he was very much surprised to see a baked leg of pork carried into the house, and after a few minutes reflection, he rushed in, and found the pious preacher eating part of the baked leg of pork, on which he bid farewell to the Methodists, and again took care for his family.

It is perhaps worth remarking, that many poor hair-dressers in Mr Wesley's society are reduced to extreme poverty; they cannot get employment, as

they will not dress hair on Sundays; and I find that a poor milk-woman, who until the beginning of the year 1792, maintained her family in a decent manner, was lately frightened out of her understanding by a Methodist preacher; her crime was, the selling milk on Sundays. The poor wretch is now confined in Bedlam, and her five children are in a workhouse. But driving people mad they treat as a trifling affair. A few weeks since, a Methodist preacher in Grub street, in one of his discourses, made use of the following language to his auditory:—"You spread a report, I am informed, that my doctrine has such effect upon some that they run mad; but I should much rather send five thousand to Bedlam, than that one soul should be sent to hell."

I at this time know a bookseller, who being a Methodist, is so conscientious as to have his hair dressed on the evening of every Saturday, and, to prevent its being discomposed in the night, he on those nights always sleeps in his elbow chair. Indeed some tell the story differently, and say, that his hair is dressed on Saturday morning, and by sleeping in his chair he saves the expense of dressing on Sundays; others say, that the first is the fact, and that he hinted at it in his shop-bills, in order that the public may know where to find a tradesman that had a very tender conscience.

I was one day called aside, and a hand-bill was given me; and thinking it to be a quack doctor's bill for some disease, I expressed my surprise at its being given to me in such a particular manner; but on reading it, I found it contained a particular account of the wonderful conversion of a John Biggs, when he was twenty-one years of age. Mr Biggs says, that ever since that time he has had communion with God his Father every hour. He publishes this bill (he says) for the glory of God; but that the public might have an opportunity of dealing with this wonderful saint and perfectly holy man, he

put his address in capitals, "JOHN BIGGS, No. 98 STRAND." I keep this bill as a curiosity.

The following note was some years since given to the clerk, for the clergyman at St Michael's church, Bristol:—"I, Mary Lockhart, return Almighty God my most hearty thanks for the benefits received in my soul, through the burning and shining lights, Mr Cennick and Mr Hall. I have not only received remission for my sins past, present, and to come, but am now entered into the rest (or made perfect) of the children of God. MARY LOCKHART."

I will now conclude this letter in the words of colonel Lambert, in the comedy of the Hypocrite:—"I cannot see with temper, sir, so many religious mountebanks impose on the unwary multitude; wretches, who make a trade of religion, and show no uncommon concern for the next world, only to raise their fortunes with greater security in this. I always respect piety and virtue; but there are pretenders to religion, as well as to courage; and as the truly brave are not such as make much noise about their valour, so, I apprehend, the truly good seldom or never deal in much grimace. I can never pay the same regard to the mask that I do to the face."

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XXVI.

"Good morrow to thee: How dost do?
I only just call'd in, to shew
My love upon this blessed day,
As I by chance came by this way."
BUTLER'S Posth. Works.

"Let not your weak unknowing hand
Presume God's bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land,
On each you judge his foe."

DEAR FRIEND,

I had no sooner left Mr Wesley's society, and begun to talk a little more like a rational being, than I found that I had incurred the hatred of some, the pity of others, the envy of many, and the displeasure of *all* Mr Wesley's—*old women!*

"No seared conscience is so fell
As that which has been burnt with zeal;
For Christian charity's as well,
A great impediment to zeal,
As zeal a pestilent disease,
To charity and peace." BUTLER'S Remains.

So that for a long time I was constantly teased with their impertinent nonsense. I believe that never was a poor devil so plagued.

"Superstition is dreadful in her wrath,
Her dire anathemas against you dart." HENRIADE.

Some as they passed by my door in their way to the Foundery would only make a stop and lift up their hands, turn up the whites of their eyes, shake their heads, groan, and pass on. Many would call in and take me aside, and after making rueful faces, ad-

dress me with, "Oh, brother Lackington! I am very sorry to find that you who began in the spirit are now like to end in the flesh. Pray, brother, do remember Lot's wife." Another would interrupt me in my business, to tell me, that "He that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is unfit for the kingdom." Another had just called as he was passing by to caution me against the bewitching snares of prosperity. Others again called to know if I was as happy then as I was when I constantly sought the Lord with my brethren, in prayer-meeting, in class, in band, &c. When I assured them that I was more happy, they in a very solemn manner assured me that I was under a very great delusion of the devil; and when I by chance happened to laugh at their enthusiastic rant, some have run out of my shop, declaring that they were afraid to stay under the same roof with me, lest the house should fall on their heads. Sometimes I have been accosted in such an alarming manner as though the house was on fire, with "Oh! brother! brother! you are fast asleep! and the flames of hell are taking hold of you;" which reminds me of the following lines:—

"——— Were hell demolish'd now,
Another must be had for you;
That providence were falsely nam'd,
If such a monster is not damn'd."

ROBERTSON'S Miscellanies.

A certain preacher assured me, in the presence of several gentlemen, that the devil would soon toss me about in the flames of hell with a pitchfork. This same eloquent mild preacher used occasionally to strip to his shirt to dodge the devil.

Mr E., a gentleman of my acquaintance, going through some alley, one Sunday, hearing a very uncommon noise, was led by curiosity to the house from whence it proceeded, and there he saw elevated, above an assembly of old women, &c., this tailor

stript in his shirt, with his wig off, and the collar of his shirt unbuttoned, sweating, foaming at the mouth, and bellowing like a baited bull. In the above manner it seems he would often amuse himself and his congregation for near two hours,

> "Cursing from his sweating tub,
> The cavaliers of Belzebub."
>
> BUTLER'S Posth. Works.

Some of the Tabernacle saints assured me that I never had one grain of saving grace, and that when I thought myself a child of God, I was only deluded by the devil, who being now quite sure of me, did not think it worth his while to deceive me any longer. Others advised me to take care of sinning against light and knowledge, and piously hoped that it was not quite too late; that I had not (they hoped) committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. Others again, who happened to be in a better humour, often told me that they should see me brought back to the true sheepfold, as they really hoped I had once been in a state of grace, and if so, that I always was in grace, in spite of all I could do: the Lord would never quit his hold of me; that I might fall foully, but that it was impossible for me to fall finally, as in the end I should be brought back on the shoulders of the everlasting gospel; for when God came to number his jewels, not one would be missing.

One of these righteous men, after passing some encomiums on me for my moral character, assured me that I had by no means fallen so low as many of God's dear children had fallen; "But fall as low as they possibly can," said he, "they are still God's children; for although they may 'be black with sin, they are fair within.'" He then read to me the following passage out of a pamphlet written against Mr Fletcher by Mr R. Hill: "David stood as completely justified in the everlasting righteousness of Christ at the time when he caused Uriah to be mur-

dered, and was committing adultery with his wife, as he was in any part of his life. For all the sins of the elect, be they more or be they less, be they past, present, or to come, were for ever done away. So that every one of those *elect* stand spotless in the sight of God." Is not this a very comfortable kind of doctrine? The pernicious consequences of such tenets, impressed on the minds of the ignorant followers of these quacks in religion, must be obvious to every person capable of reflection. They have nothing to do but enlist themselves in the band of the elect, and no matter then how criminal their life!

Thus, my dear friend, I was for a long time coaxed by some, threatened with all the tortures of the damned by others, and constantly teazed somehow or other by all the Methodists who came near me.

"Surrounded by foes, as I sat in my chair,
Who attacked like dogs that are baiting a bear."

I at last determined to laugh at all their ridiculous perversions of the scripture, and their spiritual cant. As Peter Pindar says,

"My honest anger boil'd to view
The snuffling, long-fac'd, canting crew."

For as Dr Dalton justly remarks,

"A conscience void of blame her front erects,
Her God she fears, all other fear rejects."

The consequence (as might be expected) was, they piously and charitably consigned me over to be tormented by the devil, and everywhere declared that I was turned a downright atheist. But the aspersions of such fanatics gave me no concern, for

"——— If there's a power above us,
(And that there is, all nature cries aloud
Thro' all her works) he must delight in virtue;
And that which he delights in must be happy."

ADDISON'S Cato.

And no matter "when or where." After relating such ridiculous stuff as the above, I think that I cannot conclude this better than with Swift's humorous and satirical account of the day of judgment; so humourous that I would not have quoted it had it not been written by a divine of the church of England.

"With a whirl of thought oppress'd
I sunk from reverie to rest.
A horrid vision seiz'd my head,
I saw the graves give up their dead:
Jove arm'd with terrors bursts the skies;
And thunder roars, and lightning flies!
Amaz'd, confus'd, its fate unknown,
The world stands trembling at his throne!
While each pale sinner hung his head,
Jove nodding, shook the heavens and said,
Offending race of human kind,
By nature, reason, learning, blind;
You who through frailty stept aside,
And you who never fell through pride;
You who in different sects were sham'd,
And come to see each other damn'd!
(So some folks told you, but they knew
No more of Jove's designs than you)
The world's mad business now is o'er,
And I resent these pranks no more.
—— I to such blockheads set my wit!
I damn such fools! Go, go, you're bit."

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XXVII.

" —— Say, what sounds my ear invade,
From Delphi's venerable shade?
The temple rocks, the laurel waves!
  The god! the god! the sibyl cries.
Her figure swells; she foams, she raves!
  Her figure swells to more than mortal size.
Streams of rapture roll along,
  Silver notes ascend the skies;
Wake, echo, wake, and catch the song,
  Oh, catch it ere it dies!
The sibyl speaks, the dream is o'er,
The holy harpings charm no more.
In vain she checks the god's control,
  His madding spirit fills the frame,
And moulds the features of her soul,
  Breathing a prophetic flame.
The cavern frowns! its hundred mouths unclose!
And, in the thunder's voice the fate of empire flows!"

SUPERSTITION, a Poem.

DEAR FRIEND,

THERE is a very extraordinary passage in Rousseau's Thoughts on Fanaticism. It is printed in his Thoughts, published by Debrett, vol. i. p. 11.

" Bayle," says he, " has actually proved that fanaticism is more pernicious than atheism. This is incontestable. What he has been very careful, however, not to mention, and what is not less true, is, that fanaticism, although sanguinary and cruel, is still an exalted passion, which elevates the heart of man, raises him above the fear of death, multiplies his resources exceedingly, and which only wants to be better directed to be productive of the most sublime virtues." He adds, " The argumentative spirit of controversy and philosophy, on the contrary, at-

taches us to life, enervates and debases the soul, concentrates all passions in the baseness of self-interest, and thus gradually saps the real foundation of all society."

I have somewhere read of a man, who having been cured of madness, he, instead of thanking his friends and the physician, was displeased with them, for having deprived him of the happiness he possessed in a state of insanity. And methinks Rousseau seems to be much of the same mind. But how was it possible that he should so glaringly contradict himself in so few lines? Plutarch was the first that asserted, that superstition was worse than atheism. Lord Bacon, in his Essays, says the same; and Bayle has incontestably proved it, as Rousseau acknowledges. We know from a great authority that "Fanaticism is to superstition what a delirium is to a fever, and fury to anger. He who has extacies and visions, who takes dreams for realities, and his imagination for prophesies, is an enthusiast; and he who sticks not at supporting his folly by murder is a fanatic." And yet Rousseau, when he acknowledges that fanaticism is sanguinary and cruel, calls it "an exalted passion, which elevates the heart of man, and raises him above the fear of death, multiplies his resources exceedingly." Of all the absurdities written by great men, this seems to me the greatest. If we except that which he asserts in the following lines, "Philosophy attaches to life, enervates and debases the soul, concentrates all the passions in the business of self-interest; and thus gradually," says he, "saps the real foundation of all society." That the very reverse of what Rousseau here asserts is the truth, must be obvious to every thinking being: one cannot help thinking he must have written these lines in a fit of insanity, in a fanatical conventicle. "The superstitious," says Plutarch, "are in continual fear of the divine powers, whom they suppose to be cruel and hurtful beings, and he that fears the divine powers

fears everything. The land, the sea, air, sky, darkness, light, silence, and dreams. Even slaves forget their cruel masters, and prisoners their fetters; but superstition fills the soul, even in sleep, with prodigious forms and ghostly spectres."

> "But still some frightful tales, some furious threats,
> By ——— form'd those grave and holy cheats,
> Invent new fears, whose horrid looks should fright,
> And damp thy thoughts." CREECH's Lucretius.

A much greater man than Rousseau says, "the only remedy for the infectious disease of fanaticism, is a philosophical temper, which spreading through society, at length softens manners, and obviates the excesses of the distemper; for whenever it gets ground, the best way is to fly from it and stay till the air is purified. The laws and religion are no preservative against this mental pestilence; religion, so far from being a salutary aliment in these cases, in infected brains becomes poison.

"The laws likewise have proved very ineffectual against this spiritual rage; it is indeed like reading an order of council to a lunatic. The creatures are firmly persuaded, that the spirit by which they are actuated is above all laws, and that their enthusiasm is the only law they are to regard.

"What can be answered to a person who tells you, that he had rather obey God than men; and who, in consequence of that choice, is certain to gain heaven by cutting your throat?"

Was it possible to keep the enthusiast at all times free from fanaticism, I believe the mischief to society would not be so great; as in that case, enthusiasm would be a more harmless madness; but it seems impossible to keep the two characters separate, which is the reason that the terms are often used by writers indiscriminately.

Enthusiasts and fanatics are in general conscious of their own inability to reason, hence they all exclaim

against it; and "immediate revelation being a much easier way to establish their opinions," they have recourse to it in all difficulties, and nothing is more common among the Methodists, than to hear them assert that they become acquainted with the truth of all the mysteries of Christianity, by their being revealed to them by "the Spirit of the Lord." Mr Locke says, speaking of enthusiasts, "they understand that God has promised to enlighten the mind, by a ray darted into the mind immediately from the fountain of light; and who then has so good a title to expect it, as those who are his peculiar people?

"Their minds being thus prepared, whatever groundless opinion comes to settle itself strongly upon their fancies, is an illumination from God. And whatever odd action they find in themselves a strong inclination to do, that impulse is concluded to be a call from heaven, and must be obeyed: it is a commission from above, and they cannot err in executing it.

"This I take to be properly enthusiasm, which, though founded neither on reason nor divine revelation, but rising from the conceits of a warmed or overweening brain, works yet, where it once gets footing, more powerfully on the persuasions and actions of men than either of those two, or both together; men being most forwardly obedient to the impulses they receive from themselves, and the whole man is sure to act more vigorously where the whole is carried by a natural motion. For strong conceit, like a new principle, carries all easily with it, when got above common sense, and freed from all restraint of reason, and check of reflection, it is heightened into a divine authority, in concurrence with our own temper and inclination."

"——— I feel him now
Like a strong spirit charm'd into a tree,
That leaps and moves the wood without a wind
The roused god, as all the while he lay
Entomb'd alive, starts, and dilates himself;

He struggles, and he tears my aged trunk
With holy fury; my old arteries burst;
My shrivell'd skin, like parchment, crackles at the holy fire."

DRYDEN'S Œdipus.

These impulses and revelations have been made the pretext not only for thousands of absurdities and ridiculous whims, but also for every kind of wickedness. It is but a few years since that there were in Poland a sect of these fanatics, who all at once were seized with an impulse to kill their own children, which they did most devoutly, in order to secure the salvation of those children. Lucretius says,

"Such impious use was of religion made,
Such dev'lish acts religion could persuade."

What, my dear friend, can preserve mankind from this pestilence so effectually as philosophy, which Rousseau attempts to degrade. "Painful and corporal punishment (says Beccaria) should never be applied to fanaticism, for, being founded on pride, it glories in persecution. Infamy and ridicule only should be employed against fanatics; in the first, their pride will be overbalanced by the pride of the people; and we judge of the power of the second, if we consider that even truth is obliged to summon all her force, attacked with error armed with ridicule. Thus, by opposing one passion to another, and opinion to opinion, a wise legislator puts an end to the admiration of the populace occasioned by a false principle, the original absurdity of which is veiled by some well deduced consequences."

It is for the above reasons that I have held up to public ridicule that sect of fanatics, among whom I lost so much of my time in the early part of my life, and for the same reasons I hope you will read with patience a few more of my letters, in which I intend to make you laugh with me a little more at the absurdities of the Methodists.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XXVIII.

" In London streets is often seen
A hum-drum saint with holy mien,
His looks most primitively wear
An ancient Abrahamic air,
And like bad copies of a face,
The good original disgrace."

BUTLER's Posth. Works.

" Some there are who seek for private holes,
Securely in the dark to damn their souls,
Wear vizards of hypocrisy to steal,
And slink away in masquerade to hell."

DEAR FRIEND,

IT being generally known that I had for many years been a strict Methodist, since I have freed myself from their shackles, I have been often asked if I did not believe, or rather know, that the Methodists were a vile sect of hypocrites altogether? My reply has been uniformly in the negative. I am certain that they are not in general so. The major part of them indeed are very ignorant (as is the case with enthusiasts of every religion); but I believe that a great number of the Methodists are sincere, honest, friendly people; in justice to those of that description it may not be amiss to observe, that many artful, sly, designing persons, having noticed their character, connections, &c., and knowing that a religious person is in general supposed to be honest and conscientious, have been induced to join their societies, and by assuming an appearance of extraordinary sanctity, have the better been enabled to cheat and defraud such as were not guarded against their hypocritical wiles. Rochefoucault says, that

"truth does not so much good in the world, as its appearances do mischief."

"Making religion a disguise,
Or cloak to all their villanies."
BUTLER'S Posth. Works.

I have also reason to believe that there are not a few, who think that they can as it were afford to cheat and defraud, on the score of having right notions of religion in their heads, hearing what they deem orthodox teachers, going to prayer-meetings, &c.

There are again others who think, that grace is so free and so easy to be had, or in other words, that as they can have pardon for all kinds of sins, and that at any time whenever they please, they under this idea make very little conscience of running up large scores; to which practice, I fear, such doctrines as I noticed in my last, from the pen of Mr Hill, have not a little contributed.

"The wrath of gods, though dreadful, is but slow,
With tardy footsteps comes th' avenging blow;
If all the bad are punish'd, 'twill be long
Ere my turn comes to suffer in the throng.
I may find mercy from the power divine.
They oft o'erlook such moderate guilt as mine;
Crimes, quite the same, oft meet a different end."
OWEN'S Juvenal.

I have often thought that great hurt has been done to society by the Methodist preachers, both in town and country, attending condemned malefactors, as by their fanatical conversation, visionary hymns, bold and impious applications of the scriptures, &c. many dreadful offenders against law and justice have had their passions and imaginations so worked upon, that they have been sent to the other world in such raptures, as would better become martyrs innocently suffering in a glorious cause, than criminals of the first magnitude.

A great number of narratives of these sudden con-

versions and triumphant exits have been compiled, many of them published, and circulated with the greatest avidity, to the private emolument of the editors, and doubtless to the great edification of all sinners, long habituated to a course of villainous depredations on the lives and properties of the honest part of the community; and many such accounts as have not appeared in print, have been assiduously proclaimed in all the Methodist chapels and barns throughout the three kingdoms; by which the good and pious of every denomination have been scandalized, and notorious offenders encouraged to persevere, trusting sooner or later to be honoured with a similar degree of notice, and thus by a kind of hocus-pocus, be suddenly transformed into saints.

The following remarks made by the compilers of the Monthly Review, for 1788, page 286, are so applicable to the present subject, that I hope my introducing the passage will not be deemed improper. After mentioning a couplet in one of the methodistical hymns, where it is said

> "Believe, and all your sin's forgiven;"
> Only believe, and yours is heaven."

They proceed thus:

"Such doctrine no doubt must be comfortable to poor wretches so circumstanced as those were to whom this pious preacher had the goodness to address his discourse; but some (and those not men of shallow reflection) have questioned whether it is altogether right thus to free the most flagitious outcasts of society from the terrors of an after-reckoning; since it is too well known that most of them make little account of their punishment in this world. Instead of the 'fearful looking for of (future) judgment;' they are enraptured with the prospect of a joyful flight 'to the expanded arms of a loving Saviour—longing to embrace his long-lost children.' Surely this is not the

way, humanly speaking, to check the alarming progress of moral depravity; to which, one would think no kind of encouragement ought to be given."

I must observe farther, that the unguarded manner in which the Methodist preachers make tenders of pardon and salvation, has induced many to join their fraternity whose consciences wanted very large plaisters indeed! Many of those had need to be put under a course of mortification and penance, but they generally adopt another method; a few quack nostrums, which they call faith and assurance, dries up the wound, and they then make themselves as hateful by affecting to have squeamish consciences, as they really have been obnoxious for having consciences of very wide latitude indeed. And, notwithstanding the affected change, they often are as bad or worse than ever. Butler says,

> "——That which owns the fairest pretext,
> Is often found the indirect'st.
> Hence 'tis that hypocrites still paint
> Much fairer than the real saint;
> And knaves appear more just and true
> Than honest men, who make less show."

As a friend permit me to advise you never to purchase anything at a shop where the master of it crams any of his pious nonsense into his shop bill, &c. as you may be assured you will nine times out of ten find them, in the end, arrant hypocrites, and as such make no scruple of cheating in the way of trade, if possible.

This puts me in mind of one of those pious brethren in Petticoat lane, who wrote in his shop-window, "Rumps and Burs sold here, and baked Sheep's-heads will be continued every night, if the Lord permit." The Lord had no objection, so rumps, burs, and baked sheep's-heads were sold there a long time. And I remember to have seen on a board, near

Bedminster down, "Tripe and Cow-heels sold here, as usual, except on the Lord's-day, which the Lord help me to keep holy." And on my enquiring about the person who exhibited this remarkable show-board at the inn just by, I was informed that the pious tripe-seller generally got drunk on Sundays, after he returned from the barn-preaching; which accounts for his not selling tripe on that day, having full employment, though possibly not so inoffensive, elsewhere.

I also saw, in a village near Plymouth in Devonshire, "Roger Tuttel, by God's grace and mercy, kills rats, moles, and all sorts of vermin and venomous creatures." But I need not have gone so far for pious cant, as, no doubt you must remember that a few years since, a certain pious common-councilman of the metropolis, advertised in the public papers for a porter that could carry three hundred weight, take care of horses, and serve the Lord. Of the same worthy personage I have heard it asserted, so very conscientious is he, that he once staved a barrel of beer in his cellar because he detected it *working* on the sabbath-day, which brought to my recollection four lines in drunken Barnaby's Journey:

> "To Banbury came I; O prophane one!
> Where I saw a puritane one,
> Hanging of his cat on Monday,
> For killing of a mouse on Sunday."

Mr L——e, a gentleman of my acquaintance, informs me, that a Methodist neighbour of his, in St Martin's lane, who keeps a parcel of fowls, every Saturday night makes a point of conscience of tying together the legs of every cock he has, in order to prevent them from breaking the sabbath, by gallanting the hens on Sundays; as colonel Lambert says, doctor Cantwell used to do by the turkey-cocks.

I have a few more observations to make on this remarkable sect, but, fearing I have already tired you, shall reserve them for my next.

"Seeming devotion doth but gild the knave,
That's neither faithful, honest, just, or brave,
But where religion does with virtue join,
It makes a hero like an angel shine." WALLER.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XXIX.

"Under this stone rests Hudibras,
A knight as errant as e'er was:
The controversy only lies,
Whether he was more fool than wise;
Full oft he suffer'd bangs and drubs,
And full as oft took pains in tubs:
And for the good old cause stood buff,
'Gainst many a bitter kick and cuff,
Of which the most that can be said,
He pray'd and preach'd, and preach'd and pray'd."
BUTLER's Posth. Works.

DEAR FRIEND,

IT is very remarkable that while I was writing the last five lines of my former letter to you, on Wednesday the 2nd of March 1791, I received the news of the death of Mr John Wesley, who, I am informed, died that morning at his own house, in the City road, Moorfields, in the eighty-eighth year of his age. He had no illness, but the wheels of the machine being worn out, it stopped of course. As I am on the subject of Methodism, I hope you will not deem it impertinent if I devote a few lines to this great parent of a numerous sect, whom I well knew, and feel a pleasure in speaking of with some respect.

Several days preceding his interment, being laid in his coffin, in his gown and band, he was exposed to the view of all his friends who came, and the public,

and I suppose that forty or fifty thousand persons had a sight of him. But the concourse of people was so great that many were glad to get out of the crowd without seeing him at all, and although a number of constables were present, yet the pickpockets contrived to ease many of their purses, watches, &c.

To prevent as much as possible the dreadful effects of a mob, he was interred on Wednesday, March the 9th, between five and six o'clock in the morning, in the burial ground behind his own chapel in the City road. After which Dr Whitehead (the physician) preached his funeral sermon; but notwithstanding the early hour many thousands attended more than the chapel would hold, although it is very large.

As soon as it was known that Mr Wesley was deceased, a number of needy brethren deemed it a fair opportunity of profiting by it, and each immediately set his ingenuity to work, to compose what he chose to call a life of him; and for some weeks since the funeral, the chapel-yard and its vicinity has exhibited a truly ludicrous scene, on every night of preaching, owing to the different writers and venders of these hasty performances exerting themselves to secure a good sale; one bawling out that his is the right life; a second with a pious shake of the head, declares his the real life; a third protests he has got the only genuine account; and a fourth calls them all vile cheats and impostors, &c.; so that between all these competitors, the saints are so divided and perplexed in their opinions that some decline purchasing either, others willing "to try all and keep that which is good," buy of each of these respectable venders of the life and last account of that celebrated character, while the uninterested passenger is apt to form a conclusion that the house of prayer is again become a den of thieves. Thus we see those holy candidates for heaven are so influenced by self-interest that it

"Turns meek and secret sneaking ones
To raw-heads fierce and bloody bones."

HUDIBRAS.

I cannot help thinking that Mr John Wesley, the father of the Methodists, was one of the most respectable enthusiasts that ever lived, as it is generally thought that he believed all that he taught others, and lived the same pious exemplary life that he would have his followers practise. The sale of his numerous writings produced net profits to the amount of near two thousand pounds per annum; and the weekly collection of the classes in London and Westminster amounted to a very large sum; besides this, great sums were collected at the sacraments and love-feasts, for quarterly tickets, private and public subscriptions, &c. &c. In a pamphlet which was published in the beginning of this year 1792, by an old member of their society, it is asserted that for the last ten years, the sums collected in Great Britain and Ireland have amounted to no less than four hundred thousand pounds per annum, which reminds me of Peter Pindar's humorous lines.

"I've often read those pious whims,
Methodists' sweet damnation hymns,
That chant of heav'nly riches:
What have they done, those heavenly strains,
Devoutly squeez'd from canting brains,
But fill'd their earthly breeches?"

Besides the above, many private collections are made in all his societies throughout the three kingdoms, so that Mr Wesley might have amassed an immense fortune, had riches been his object. But instead of accumulating wealth he expended all his own private property, and I have been often informed, from good authority, that he never denied relief to a poor person that asked him. To needy tradesmen I have known him to give ten or twenty pounds at once. In going a few yards from his study to the pulpit he generally gave away a handful of half-crowns to poor old people of his society. He was indeed charitable to an extreme, as he often gave to unworthy objects, nor would he keep money sufficient to hold out on

his journies. One of his friends informs me, that he left but four pounds ten shillings behind him, and I have heard him declare that he would not die worth twenty pounds, except his books for sale, which he has left to the "general Methodist fund, for carrying on the work of God, by itinerant preachers," charged only with a rent of eighty-five pounds a year, which he has left to the wife and children of his brother Charles.

His learning and great abilities are well known. But I cannot help noticing that in one of his publications (stepping out of his line) he betrayed extreme weakness and credulity, though no doubt his intentions were good. What I allude to is his 'Primitive Physic,' a work certainly of a dangerous tendency, as the majority of remedies therein prescribed are most assuredly inefficacious, and many of them very dangerous, if administered. The consequence of the first is, that while poor ignorant people are trying these remedies (besides the very great probability of their mistaking the case) the diseases perhaps become so inveterate as to resist the power of more efficacious remedies properly applied; and with regard to those of a highly dangerous nature, how rash to trust them in the hands of such uninformed people as this book was almost solely intended for, especially when sanctioned by the name of an author whose influence impressed the minds of the unfortunate patients with the most powerful conviction! Many fatal effects, I fear, have been produced by a blind adherence to this compilation; which carries with it more the appearance of being the production of an ignorant opiniated old woman, than of the man of science and education: one melancholy instance is fresh in my memory; a much esteemed friend having fallen an immediate sacrifice to an imprudent application of one of these remedies.

Permit me just to give you one specimen of the author's wonderful abilities, by quoting a receipt,

which if not an infallible remedy, must at least be acknowledged to be a singular one.

"TO CURE A WINDY CHOLIC.

"Suck a healthy woman daily. This (says Mr Wesley) was tried by my father."

Should you, my dear friend, be desirous of perusing a variety of remedies, equally judicious as well as efficacious with those of Mr Wesley, you will meet with ample satisfaction by turning to 'Dom Pernety's Voyage to the Falkland Islands.' Page 153 to 162, quarto edition.

Some of the receipts there inserted are so truly curious, I can scarce refrain from treating you with a specimen or two; but some of them being very indelicate, I must take care in selecting, for, like Simpkin,

"I pity the ladies so modest and nice."

Take the two following, one being no doubt an effectual remedy for a grievous complaint of that useful quadruped the horse; the other at least equally certain for the cure of one of the most dangerous disorders human nature is subject to.

"TO CURE A FOUNDERED HORSE.

"Let him take one or two spoonfuls of common salt in half a pint of water!"

"FOR A MALIGNANT FEVER.

"A live tench applied to the feet for twelve hours, then buried quietly, or thrown down the house of office, and the patient will soon recover."

It was a circumstance peculiarly happy for the practitioners of physic, though no doubt a terrible misfortune to the public, that the difference in religious principles of these two reverend gentlemen proved an effectual bar to the union of their medical abilities, which appear so exactly correspondent; had such an event taken place, that horrid monster disease might by this time have been banished from the earth, and the sons of Æsculapius would be doomed to feed

on their own compositions or starve! The Rev. Dr Fordyce, in a late publication, has also given the world a remedy for the cramp, as delicate as efficacious.

But here I think I see you smile at my censuring Mr Wesley for stepping out of his line, when at the very moment I am committing the same error by obtruding my judgment upon the science of physic. I shall only reply, many thought I did the same when I commenced bookseller: and a friend once taught me the adage, (be not offended, 'tis the only scrap of Latin I shall give you)—"*Ne sutor ultra crepidam.*" But the event has proved it otherwise, and I flatter myself every candid and judicious person capable of judging will think with me on the above subject. And I also must inform you, that in one disorder I have been successful even in physic. The fact is this: Mrs Lackington having several times been cured of the dropsy in the chest by broom tea, I prescribed it to others, nor has it once failed. The last instance was in 1792: a young lady, an only daughter, being nearly lost to her family, she having had the dropsy two years, by my desire took broom tea, a little at a time, once or twice a day, weak or strong as she could bear. She continued this several months, by which she perfectly recovered her health, and I hope she will soon have a good husband. But to resume my narrative.

What a pity that such a character as Mr Wesley was, upon the whole, should have been a dupe and a rank enthusiast! A believer in dreams, visions, immediate revelations, miraculous cures, witchcraft, and many other ridiculous absurdities, as appears from many passages of his journals, to the great disgrace of his abilities and learning; which puts one in mind of Cæsar, who in his Commentaries turns bridge builder, and a maker of engines; of Periander, who, although he was an excellent physician, quitted physic to write bad verses; sir Isaac Newton's Exposition of the Revelations, Milton's Paradise Regained,

Dr Johnson's unmanly and childish devotions, &c. &c., and (to compare small things with greater) J. L.'s turning author.

"This Verro's fault, by frequent praises fir'd,
He several parts has tried, in each admir'd;
That Verro was not ev'ry way complete,
'Twas long unknown, and might have been so yet.
But—mad, the unhappy man pursu'd,
That only thing heav'n meant he never should;
And thus his proper road to fame neglected
He's ridicul'd for that he but affected."

DALACOURT.

However, I think we may safely affirm that Mr Wesley was a good, sincere, and honest one, who denied himself many things; and really thought that he disregarded the praise and blame of the world, when he was more courted, respected, and followed, than any man living, and he ruled over a hundred and twenty thousand people with an absolute sway, and the love of power seems to have been the main spring of all his actions. I am inclined to believe that his death will be attended with consequences somewhat similar to those which followed the death of Alexander the Great. His spiritual generals will be putting in their pretensions, and soon divide their master's conquests. His death happened at a time rather critical to the Methodists, as the Swedenborgians, or New Jerusalemists, are gaining ground very fast. Many of the Methodists, both preachers and hearers, are already gone over to their party, many more will now, undoubtedly, follow; and the death of that great female champion of Methodism, the **c** untess of Huntingdon, which has since happened, will in all probability occasion another considerable defection from that branch of Methodists, and an additional reinforcement of the Swedenborgians; a proof of the fondness of mankind for novelty and the marvellous, even in religious matters.

Great discoveries and improvements have of late years been made in various branches of the arts and

sciences; but valuable and important as these discoveries are, how trifling do they appear when compared with the astonishing and wonderful discoveries which have been made by the Swedenborgians, who are, it seems, beyond a doubt, "the only true church of God;" by them "the true science of the language of correspondence" is discovered, so that mankind are no longer left in the dark; the divine arcana are now laid open, and mysteries are no longer mysteries." "God in me speaks to God in you;" so that I can talk to you of feasting on chariots and horses, and be perfectly understood. And although they read any chapter in the bible, without exception, publicly in the congregations, yet the most prudish lady, or the most delicate virgin, does not blush for being quite spiritual, and being acquainted with the "true language of correspondence." They never notice indelicate expressions, being wholly occupied in applying the spiritual corresponding words. These, my friend, are glorious discoveries indeed. And what a pity it is that so many thousand pious learned men should have wasted so much time in endeavouring to explain the mysterious parts of the Prophets and the Revelations to no purpose, but to make work for booksellers! It was very providential for them that the Swedenborgians did not appear in the more early ages of the church, but a very great loss to mankind in general; the more so, as it seems the great man, after whom the sect are named, composed the whole of his numerous works under the immediate guidance of the Holy Ghost, and are more valuable than the bible. I must just take notice of another wonderful community.

In the beginning of the year 1786, a strange sect of religious fanatics sprung up near Dumfries in Scotland; the first of whom seems to have been a lady Buchan, as from her they were called Buchanites. They were but few in number, and all lived in one house together, both men and women, and had all things in common. In 1791 an English-

man of some property joined their society, and gave all that he had to the common stock. The next day lady Buchan proclaimed a fast, which was to be strictly kept for six weeks; this was no ways pleasing to the Englishman, so that after he had fasted two days, he applied to the sheriff, in order to recover his property from out of the stock of the holy community; but the sheriff informed him that, as it was a free gift, it was not in his power to recover it.

Lady Buchan at times called herself the Holy Spirit, and in that character applied to many people in order to make them converts to this new sect.

The chief article of their faith was, that they should never taste of death, but should be translated, and when any one of them happened to die, the rest said it was for want of faith; and, when lady Buchan died, they insisted on keeping her unburied, declaring that she could not be dead: under this assurance she was kept a long time; the magistrates however at last had her buried by force, to prevent any bad consequences that might arise from the horrid stench, which began to make the neighbourhood insupportable.

A little before she expired, she called her neighbours near her, and informed them that she had a secret to communicate to them, which was, that she was the Virgin Mary, the real mother of Jesus, the same woman mentioned in the Revelations as being clothed with the sun, &c. who was driven into the wilderness; that she had been wandering in the world ever since our Saviour's days; that though she yet appeared to die they need not be discouraged, for she would only sleep a little, and in a short time visit them again and conduct them to New Jerusalem. I had this curious account from some gentlemen in Scotland, except that part where she calls herself the Virgin, which I added from 'The Bee' for July 1791.

A short time after Mr Wesley's chapel was finished in the City Road, an old gentleman was buried in the burial-ground behind it, who on his death-bed in-

formed his wife that he should soon come to life again; on which account the door of the vault was not fastened, and the old lady paid him a visit every day, to see if he was come to life, and in this practice did she continue two years, when the poor old lady paid him her last visit, and was laid by his side.

I will make some further remarks on the Methodists in my next.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XXX.

"More haughty than the rest, the ———
Appear with belly gaunt, and famish'd face:
Never was so deform'd a babe of grace." DRYDEN.

——— "Olios made of conflagration,
Of gulphs, of brimstone, and damnation,
Eternal torments, furnace, worm,
Hell fire, a whirlwind, and a storm;
With Mammon, Satan, and perdition,
And Belzebub to help the dish on;
Belial, and Lucifer, and all
The nicknames which Old Nick we call." E. LLOYD.

DEAR FRIEND,

ALTHOUGH Mr Wesley was possessed of a very great share both of natural and acquired abilities, yet I suppose it scarcely necessary to inform you, that this is by no means the case with his preachers in general; for although there are amongst them some truly sensible, intelligent men, yet the major part are very ignorant and extremely illiterate: many of these excellent spiritual guides cannot read a chapter in the bible, though containing the deep mysteries which

they have the rashness and presumption to pretend to explain. Many others cannot write their own names.

" A motley crew, from various callings sprung,
Some of you have been gipsies, others sailors;
Some drays have whistling driven, or carts of dung,
And others mighty barbers been and tailors."
MAT. BRAMBLE.

But so great is the ignorance of Mr Wesley's people in general, that they often neglect the more rational and sensible of their preachers, and are better pleased with such as are even destitute of common sense; really believing that the incoherent nonsense which they from time to time pour forth, is dictated by the Holy Spirit. As these noisy declaimers never scruple to call themselves the "servants of the most High God," ambassadors from heaven, &c. Peter Pindar, speaking of one of that stamp, seems to think that if he was sent from God, heaven had made a bad choice: take his own words:—

" Whene'er I hear that stupid parson H—,
God's house with ev'ry nonsense fill,
And when with blasphemy each sentence cramm'd;
And when I hear the impostor cry,
I've news, you raggamuffins, from the sky;
I'm come to tell ye, that you'll all be damn'd:
I'm come from God, ye strumpets—come from God—
I'm God Almighty's servant—hear my voice.
Which, if it were so, would be vastly odd,
Since heav'n would show bad judgment in the choice."

It is always observable that the more ignorant people are the more confidence they possess. This confidence, or impudence, passes with the vulgar as a mark of their being in the right; and the more the ignorance of the preachers is discovered, the more are they brought down to their own standard. Again, the more ignorant preachers having very contracted ideas of real religion and manly virtue, of course supply the want of it with a ridiculous fuss about trifles, which passes with the ignorant for a more

sanctified department, and hence arises much of the mischief which has been so justly charged on the Methodists. For by making the path to heaven so very narrow, and beset with ten thousand bugbears, many, despairing to be ever able to walk in it, have thrown off all religion and morality, and sunk into the abyss of vice and wickedness. Others have their tempers so soured as to become lost to all the tender connexions of husband, wife, father, child, &c., really believing that they are literally to hate father, mother, &c., for Christ's sake. Thus is sweet domestic peace and happiness for ever blasted.

"Enlivening hope, and fond desire,
Resign the heart to spleen and care;
Scarce frighted love maintains her fire,
And rapture saddens to despair."

DR JOHNSON.

Many have in a fit of despondency put a period to their existence, it having become a burthen too intolerable to be borne. Some have been so infatuated with the idea of fasting to mortify the flesh, that their strict perseverance in it has been productive of the most serious consequences: two instances of which lately occurred in one family in the City Road: the mistress was deprived of her senses, and the maid literally fasted herself to death; and Bedlam and private mad-houses now contain many very melancholy instances of the dreadful effects of religious despondency; not to mention the hundreds that have died from time to time in such places, and the numerous suicides which have been traced to the same source.

I knew one man who for many years believed himself to be the Holy Ghost, and endeavoured to make his acquaintance believe the same: in other respects he appeared to be in his right senses.

Mr Bentley says, in his letter to the members of the House of Commons, dated May 12th, 1791, that although he had a fortune of one thousand pounds, and naturally liked good living, yet that he lived on

horse and ass flesh, barley bread, stinking butter, &c., and when he found that his eating such things gave offence to his neighbours, he left off eating ass flesh, and only lived on vegetables, as the common sort of food by their dearness hurt his *conscience*.

A few years since I saw in a field not seven miles from China-hall, Mr Taylor, a ship-carpenter, of Deptford, tossing up his bible in the air. This he often repeated, and raved at a strange rate. Amongst other things, (pointing to a building at some distance) "That," said he, "is the devil's house, and it shall not stand three days longer!" On the third day after this I saw with surprise an account in one of the public papers of that very building having been set on fire, and burnt to the ground; and thus the poor itinerant disciples of Thespis lost the whole of their wardrobe and scenery.

This religious maniac soon after preached very often in Smithfield and Moorfields; but he did not wholly depend on the operations of the Holy Spirit, as at last he seldom began to preach until he was nearly drunk, or filled with another kind of spirit, and then he was a "very powerful preacher indeed."

"Great were his looks, his eyes with hollow stare
Deep, deep within the burning sockets roll'd,
Like Gorgon's crest, or stern Alecto's hair;
His tempest-beaten locks erect and bold,
With horrid shade his temples seem'd to fold,
His beard the rest conceal'd, a black disguise."

ORLANDO FURIOSO.

But the good man happening several times to exert himself rather too much, had nearly tumbled headlong out of his portable pulpit; these accidents the mob uncharitably ascribed to the liquor that he had drank, and with mud, stones, dead cats, &c., drove him off every time he came, until at last our preacher took his leave of them with saying, "that he perceived that it was in vain to attempt their conversion, as he saw that God had given them over to the hardness of their hearts."

I must inform you that this devout, zealous preacher lived many years before this, and some years after, with a very holy sister, and begot sons and daughters without being brought into bondage, by submitting to the carnal ordinance of marriage. I have been lately informed, that his enthusiasm and superstition at last entirely deprived him of the small remains of reason, and that he died in a private mad-house.

But although this holy man deserted them, yet other spiritual knights-errant were not wanting, so that a little time before the heaps of stones which lay for years in Moorfields were removed, for the purpose of building on the spot, I have seen five or six in a day preaching their initiation sermons from those elevated situations, until they could collect a sufficient sum of money to purchase pulpits. Some of these excellent preachers received the whole of their divine education, and took up their degrees, in Moorfields, and in due time, after having given ample and satisfactory proofs of being properly qualified, have been admitted to professorships in the noble college situated on the south side of those fields, generally known by the name of Bedlam. You must know, sir, that many of the lazy part of the community set up stalls in Moorfields to buy and sell apples, old iron, &c., several of these having heard such edifying discourses frequently repeated as they sat at their stalls, and observing the success which those kind of preachers met with, boldly resolved to make trial of their spiritual gifts on the heaps of stones, and have now totally abandoned their stalls, and are gone forth as ambassadors of heaven.

" —— Thus poor Crispin, crazy for the praise
Of pulpit eloquence, to preach essays;
His 'prentice, clerk; his cobbling stool his stage,
Flies to the fields with tabernacle rage!
With Rowland's skill erects his orbs of sight,
Or turns them, ravish'd, on the inward light!
New faith, all saving faith, proclaims aloud!
Now deals damnation to the trembling crowd;

Ask'd why for preaching he deserts his stall,
(Bred at Moorfields, or Tott'nham) hear him bawl,
Because as how I feels I has a call."

BUSBY'S Age of Genius.

One of those who cannot read, lately informed me that he had quitted all temporal concerns for the good of poor ignorant sinners.

John Turpin, a waiter of an inn at Dartmouth, some time late in 1791, made free with some of his master's plate, and was whipped at the tail of a cart round the town, after which he went to Totnes, about twelve miles from Dartmouth, and commenced Methodist preacher; and a few months after he had the assurance to return to Dartmouth to proclaim his conversion, and to preach what he was pleased to call the gospel, and in that capacity he soon collected together as great a number of people round his pulpit as before he had done round his cart, and among others he made a convert of the clerk of the parish, who entertained him in his house at free cost. Some time this spring (1792) as he was one Sunday morning going towards the church with the clerk, he pretended to be seized on a sudden with griping pains, and told the clerk that he must go back, on which the old fool of a clerk gave him the key of his house, and also a key of the closet where he kept some brandy, and advised him to go and take a glass. On the old man's return from church, he missed a watch, and on farther search he missed another watch, and upwards of twenty guineas in gold. And as the preacher was not to be found, he hired horses, and with a constable set off in pursuit of this heavenly-minded rascal, and about fifteen miles from Dartmouth they took him with the whole of the property on him.

At Exeter assizes, in March, he was tried, found guilty, and condemned to be hung; but was reprieved, and is since sent to Botany Bay, where perhaps he may have address enough to get himself made chaplain to Barrington. As on his trial he told the judge

that, if he would send him to Botany Bay, he would do much towards the glory of God, in sending one among the abandoned transports, who could call them to repentance, and bring them to Christ, the friend of the chief of sinners.

But before I take my leave of the subject, I will in few words inform you how the preachers were governed and supported. Mr Wesley every year ordered the major part of his travelling preachers in Great Britain and Ireland, which were upwards of two hundred in number, to meet together, one year at London, the next year at Bristol, and the following at Manchester; this meeting he called a conference. At these conferences the business of the whole society was transacted, new preachers admitted, and some turned off, or silenced; complaints heard, differences adjusted, &c. Mr Wesley having divided Great Britain into circuits, at those conferences he appointed the preachers to every circuit for the following year; and, as he well knew the general want of abilities among his preachers, he limited their time of preaching in one circuit to a year, and so in some measure made up the want of abilities by variety; most of those circuits had three or four preachers every year, and in many country places they had but one sermon a-week from the travelling preachers, so that each preacher preached about twelve sermons in the year (sometimes it may be twenty) at each place. In every circuit one of the preachers was called the assistant; to him the various contributions were paid, and of him might be had any of Mr Wesley's publications. He also admitted new members, or turned out any who were judged unworthy of bearing the high appellation of a Methodist.

Each itinerant preacher had a horse found him, which, with himself, is maintained by some brother or sister wherever they go, as the preachers do not put up at any inn, and yet they have as regular stages to call at as the coaches have, they having made converts

at convenient distances in most parts of Great Britain and Ireland.

Each travelling preacher was then allowed twelve pounds a-year to find himself clothes, pay turnpikes, &c., besides what they could get privately out of the old women's pockets. But, besides those circuit-preachers, there "were in the year 1790, in Europe and America, thirteen or fourteen hundred" of local holders-forth, who do not preach out of their own neighbourhood, and those in general are the most ignorant of all.

Many of the circuit-preachers only travel until they can marry a rich widow, or some ignorant young convert with money, which has often been the cause of great unhappiness in many respectable families. The following poetical description of the Methodist preachers is so much to my purpose that I must insert it:—

"Every mechanic will commence
Orator, without mood or tense;
Pudding is pudding still they know,
Whether it has a plum or no.
So, though the preacher have no skill,
A sermon is a sermon still.

"The bricklay'r throws his trowel by,
And now builds mansions in the sky:
The cobbler, touch'd with holy pride,
Flings his old shoes and last aside,
And now devoutly sets about
Cobbling of souls that ne'er wear out;
The baker now a preacher grown,
Finds man lives not by bread alone,
And now his customers he feeds
With prayers, with sermons, groans, and creeds
The tinman, moved by warmth within,
Hammers the gospel just like tin;
Weavers inspir'd their shuttles leave,
Sermons and flimsy hymns to weave;
Barbers unreap'd will leave the chin,
To trim, and shave the man within;

The waterman forgets his wherry,
And opens a celestial ferry;
The brewer, bit by frenzy's grub,
The mashing for the preaching tub
Resigns, those waters to explore,
Which if you drink, you thirst no more;
The gard'ner, weary of his trade,
Tir'd of the mattock and the spade,
Chang'd to Apollos in a trice,
Waters the plants of paradise;
The fishermen no longer set
For fish the meshes of their net,
But catch, like Peter, men of sin,
For catching is to take them in."

I now take a final leave of Methodism, with assuring you that, in giving a general idea of the tenets and practices of a numerous sect who have excited much public attention, I have invariably had in view to speak of them as they are, "nothing to extenuate, nor set down aught in malice." Should you wish to see the errors of the Methodists particularly exposed, you may read bishop Lavington's 'Enthusiasm of the Methodists and Baptists compared.' It is esteemed a very good work, it will amuse as well as instruct you. In my next I intended to have resumed the account of my own affairs; but an extraordinary publication will tempt me to add one letter more on the Methodists.

I am, dear friend, yours

LETTER XXXI.

"Religion, fairest maid on earth,
As meek as good, who drew her breath
From the blest union when in heaven,
Pleasure was bride to virtue given;
Religion ever pleas'd to pray,
Possess'd the precious gift one day;
Hypocrisy, of Cunning born,
Crept in and stole it ere the morn."

CHURCHILL.

DEAR FRIEND,

ALTHOUGH I was many years in connexion with Mr Wesley's people, it seems, according to a pamphlet published a few months after the two first editions of my Memoirs, that I was but superficially acquainted with Mr Wesley and his preachers. The pamphlet is entitled, 'A Letter to the Rev. T. Coke, LL.D. and Mr H. Moore.' To which is added, 'An Appeal and Remonstrance to the People called Methodists, by an old Member of the Society.' This old member informs us, that he has been acquainted with the Methodists twenty-eight years, and if their preachers are but half as bad as he has drawn them, they are a detestable set of sly, deceiving villains. The letter was occasioned by Dr Coke and Mr Moore's proposals for publishing Mr Wesley's Life, in opposition to that advertised (under the sanction of the executors) to be written by Dr Whitehead.

And we are informed that after Mr Wesley's manuscripts and private papers had been given up to Dr Whitehead, and the doctor appointed to write his Life, and this Life announced to the public by the executors as the only authentic work, on a misun-

derstanding taking place between Dr Whitehead and the preachers, because the doctor would not submit his work to be inspected, altered, &c. and also because the doctor would not consent to give to the preachers at the conference nearly the whole of the profits derived from his labours, they then sent a circular letter, signed by nine of their head preachers, to all their societies, and advised them to return the subscriptions that they had taken for Dr Whitehead's Life of Mr Wesley, and to procure all the subscriptions in their power for another Life of Mr Wesley, to be written by Dr Coke and Mr Moore.

The following quotations I think will please you, page 8, &c. "That Mr Wesley was a great man is an undeniable truth; that is, comparatively: great amongst little people."

"Nothing can exhibit his character as an ambitious man more than the following anecdote, whichI can give from the most authentic authority. When a boy he was in the Charter-house school; the Rev. A. Tooke, the author of the Pantheon, was then master, and observing that his pupil, who was remarkably forward in his studies, yet constantly associated with the inferior classes, and it was his custom to be surrounded by a number of the little boys, haranguing them, Mr Tooke once accidentally broke in upon him when in the middle of an oration, and interrupted him, by desiring him to follow him to the parlour. Mr Wesley, offended by being thus abruptly deprived of an opportunity of displaying his superior abilities, obeyed his master very reluctantly. When they had got into the parlour, Mr Tooke said to him: 'John, I wonder that you who are so much above the lower forms should constantly associate with them, for you should now consider yourself as a man, and affect the company of the bigger boys, who are your equals.' Our hero, who could hardly stifle his resentment while his master spoke, boldly replied: 'Better to rule in hell, than serve in heaven.'

"Mr Tooke dismissed his pupil with this remarkable observation to the assistant master. 'That boy, though designed for the church, will never get a living in it, for his ambitious soul will never acknowledge a superior or be confined to a parish.'

"That he was superior to the prejudices he inculcated to his followers, and with what contempt he sometimes treated the lay-preachers, the following will show. Being at supper one Sunday night, (a short time before his death) with several of the preachers, one of them observed that, whenever Mr Wesley travelled, he was always invited to the houses of the neighbouring nobility and gentry; but when the preachers travelled, no notice was taken of them, which he could not account for. Mr Wesley replied, 'It was the way of the world to court the great, but I say, love me, love my dog!' enjoying his triumph with a hearty laugh at their expense."

After this old member's letter comes his Appeal and Remonstrance to the Methodists, which, as coming from an old Methodist, contains some very extraordinary assertions and facts, and letters more extraordinary. I shall give you some extracts from it in page 28. "Faith is the ground-work of (Methodist) evidence; it precludes the necessity of every virtue; it is to be feared it has sent more of its votaries to Bedlam than to heaven; is to wise men a stumbling block, an unintelligible jargon of mystical nonsense, which common sense and common honesty reject."

Page 30, &c "It has been computed that the contributions raised among the members of the different societies in Great Britain and Ireland for these last ten years, has amounted to no less than four hundred thousand pounds per annum. It has been further proved, that about one-eighth part of this sum is appropriated to the purposes for which it was raised, and the remainder is disposed of at the discretion of the conference, the preachers, and the stewards. This calculation does not include the enormous sums known

to be raised privately by the influence of the preachers in their respective circuits, under the various pretensions of distress, &c.

"However, I do not pretend to vouch for the accuracy of this calculation, yet I think it by no means exaggerated. What has come within my own knowledge I can assert with confidence, and I challenge any one to refute it.

"Of Kingswood school, I can speak with certainty; for this foundation many thousands have been raised which never were, and I believe never were intended to be, applied to that charity. During eight years that I was at Kingswood, it not only supported itself but produced a considerable annual surplus.

"One of the masters of Kingswood school, being deficient in his accounts, he was judged an improper person to enjoy any place of trust, and was accordingly dismissed and appointed to a circuit as a travelling preacher; but any one will do for that, who has but impudence and hypocrisy; no matter whether he possesses a grain of honesty. Now if this was the case with respect to Kingswood, may we not conclude that the same iniquitous principle pervaded the administration of the finances in all the different departments?"

Page 33, &c. "O how long, ye sheep, will ye be the prey of wolves, who fleece and devour you at pleasure; and, ye fools, be the dupes of knavery and hypocrisy?

"Open your eyes and behold the villain and hypocrite unmasked, in instances of the most flagitious crimes, and deeds of the blackest dye; perpetrated by wretches whom you tamely suffer to devour your substance, and whom you cheerfully contribute to support in idleness and luxury, which brings into contempt the gospel, and whose example has done more harm to religion than that of the most abandoned and profligate open sinner, admitting at the same time that

there may be, and I hope there are, some honest and sincere men amongst them.

"To begin then with the late Rev. J. Wesley. As the founder and head, he must be considered as the *primum mobile*, or first mover of this mighty machine of hypocrisy, fraud, and villainy. Yet were his motives originally laudable in their intention, virtuous in their object, but unhappy in their consequences. This I will endeavour to make appear by an impartial review of his life, character, and conduct. I flatter myself that I am in some measure qualified, being totally divested of prejudice, and having no interest either in representing him as a saint or a devil.

"From what I have observed during near twenty-eight years that I have known him, I have uniformly found him ambitious, imperious, and positive even to obstinacy. His learning and knowledge various and general, but superficial; his judgment too hasty and decisive to be always just; his penetration acute, yet was he constantly the dupe to his credulity and his unaccountable and universal good opinion of mankind. Humane, generous, and just. In his private opinions, liberal to a degree inconsistent with strict christianity; in his public declarations, rigid almost to intolerance. From this observation of the inconsistency of his private opinions and public declarations, I have often been inclined to doubt his sincerity, even in the profession of the Christian faith. In his temper, impetuous and impatient of contradiction; but in his heart, a stranger to malice or resentment: incapable of particular attachment to any individual, he knew no ties of blood or claims of kindred; never violently or durably affected by grief, sorrow, or any of the passions to which humanity is subject; susceptible of the grossest flattery, and the most fulsome panegyric was constantly accepted and rewarded. In his views and expectations, sanguine and unbounded, but though often disappointed, never dejected. Of

his benevolence and charity much has been said; but it is to be observed, benevolence is but a passive virtue, and his charity was no more than bribery; he knew no other use of money but to give it away, and he found out that an hundred pounds would go further in half-crowns than in pounds; so that his charity was little more than parade, as he hardly ever essentially relieved an object of distress; in fact, his charity was no more than putting his money to interest, as the example excited his followers to the practice of the same virtue, and doubled their subscriptions and contributions. In his constitution warm, and consequently amorous; in his manner of living luxurious and strictly epicurean, and fond of dishes highly relished, and fond of drinking the richest wines, in which he indulged often, but never to excess. He was indebted more to his commanding, positive, and authoritative manner, than to any intrinsically superior abilities.

"Having thus given the outlines of his character, I shall only observe that he appears to have been more a philosopher than a Christian; and shall then proceed to some anecdotes and circumstances which will corroborate my assertions, and justify my conclusion.

"As the work of God, as it is called, was the sphere of action in which he was more particularly and conspicuously engaged, and as I have ventured to question the sincerity of his professions, it is proper that I should state my reasons for so doing. First then of conversion, in the methodistical sense of the word; for, in the true sense, I apprehend it to be neither more nor less than forsaking vice and practising virtue; but, however, the methodistical sense imports quite a different thing, and it is in that sense we shall view it. I have made it an invariable observation that Mr Wesley, although he was often in the company of sensible men who were capable of forming an opinion, and presumed to judge for themselves by the light of nature, the evidence of the senses, and the aid of

reason and philosophy; but of such he never attempted the conversion. In his own family and amongst his relations he never attempted, or, if he did attempt, he never succeeded; except now and then with a female in whom he found a heart susceptible of any impression he pleased to give. It is remarkable, that even the children of Mr C. W. were never converted, because they, and most of his relations possessed sense enough to discover hypocrisy, and honesty enough to reject the advantage they might have derived from assuming it. But what is still more extraordinary is, that out of so many hundred who have been educated at Kingswood, in the most rigid discipline of Methodism, hardly any have embraced their tenets, or become members of the society. The reason is pretty obvious; they were taught too much to imbibe the ridiculous prejudices the founder wished to be instilled into their minds; philosophy and Methodism are utterly incompatible. When the human mind is formed by the study of philosophy, it expands itself to the contemplation of things.

"It is true indeed, the work was sometimes attended with power among the children at Kingswood. Conversions were frequent, but never durable. I myself was converted some ten or a dozen times, but unluckily my class leader was detected in having stolen a pair of silver buckles. This was a dreadful stroke to the work, and a glorious triumph to the wicked one. The whole fabric of faith, grace, and all its concomitant vices, as hypocrisy, &c. &c. experienced a total overthrow. The serious boys, as they are called by way of eminence, fell into the utmost contempt, and ever after the leader of a class was stiled captain of the gang, a convert and a thief were synonymous terms.

"A general conversion among the boys was once effected by the late excellent Mr Fletcher; one poor boy only excepted, who unfortunately resisted the influence of the Holy Spirit; for which he was severely flogged,

which did not fail of the desired effect, and impressed proper notions of religion in his mind. Unhappily these operations of the spirit, though violent, were but of short duration.

"As the conversion of men and women is a more serious concern than that of children, I will describe one, to which I was an eye-witness among the poor colliers at Kingswood. One of those presumptuous and impious fanatical wretches, who assume the character of ministers of God, and take upon them in his most holy name to denounce his curses and vengeance against those who are far less guilty than themselves; a fellow of this description, of the name of Sanderson, preaching to a congregation of ignorant, but harmless people; this fellow took upon himself, in the name of God, to condemn them all to eternal damnation, painting their deplorable state in the most dreadful colours: some of his hearers were soon evidently affected by this discourse, which he took care to improve, and, taking the advantage of the kindling spark, addressed himself more particularly to them, whom he soon 'made roar for the disquietude of their souls.' The whole congregation were quickly affected in the like manner; one and all exclaimed, 'What shall I do to be saved? Oh, I'm damned! I'm damned! I'm damned to all eternity! What shall I do! oh! oh! oh!' Our performer observing to what a state he had reduced his audience, redoubled his threats of divine wrath and vengeance, and with a voice terrible as thunder, demanded, 'Is there any backslider in the presence of God?' A dead and solemn pause ensued, till he exclaimed, 'Here is an old grey-headed sinner;' at the same time striking with his hand violently on the bald pate of an honest old man who sat under the desk; the poor man gave a deep groan, whether from conviction, or from the pain of the blow, I know not, for it was far from being gentle. The farce was not yet concluded: when they were strongly convulsed with these convic-

tions, he fell down upon his knees, and with the greatest fervency, accompanied with abundance of tears, he intreated the Lord in mighty prayer, to have compassion on the poor desponding sinners whom he had brought to a proper sense of their danger; the prayer continued about ten minutes, accompanied by the sighs and groans of the converted and alarmed sinners in concert, making a most divine harmony; when suddenly starting up, he pretended to have received a gracious answer to his prayer, and with a joyful and smiling countenance, pointing towards the window, exclaimed—'Behold the lamb!' 'Where! where! where!' was the cry of every contrite and returning sinner, (and they were all of that description). 'There!' (continued the preacher, extending his arms towards the window where he pretended first to have espied the lamb.) 'In heaven! in *colo!* making intercession for your sins! and I have his authority to proclaim unto you that your sins are forgiven—depart in peace.—O, my dearest brethren, how sweet is the sound of those extatic words. 'Behold the lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.' But could you but feel the peculiar energy, the divine force, the rapturous and cheering import of the original, your mouths would be filled with praise, and your hearts with divine joy, holy exultation, and unspeakable gratitude. Only mark the sound of the words, even that will convey an inexpressible pleasure to your souls, '*Hecca Hangus Dei! Ki dollit pekkaltus Monday.*' The school boys (who were seated in a pew detached from the congregation on account of a prophane and contemptuous behaviour during service) immediately burst into a loud laugh, on one of the congregation saying, 'O, the blessed man! we shall see him again on Monday.'"

In some pages following we have an account of the Methodist preacher's first converting his benefactor's daughter, and then debauching her; also of a preacher at Beverly, in Yorkshire, that collected fifteen pounds

for a poor man in great distress, and gave him only fifteen shillings, reserving to himself fourteen pounds five shillings for the trouble of collecting it, with which, and twenty pounds more he was entrusted with, he decamped the next day, to the astonishment of the simple on whom he had imposed.

I wish the author, as he proposes, may soon give us a more particular account of the Methodists, preachers and people, and also of some of Mr Wesley's private opinions, &c.

This pamphlet concludes with very curious letters written by Mr J. Wesley; and he informs us, in a note, that the publisher has his address, in order to direct any person to the author, where they may see the original letters. I here give you the whole of these extraordinary letters.

Page 50, &c.

"DEAR SIR,

"FOR your obliging letter, which I received this morning, I return you thanks.

"Our opinions for the most part perfectly coincide respecting the stability of the connexion, after my head is laid in the dust.

"This however is a subject, about which I am not so anxious as you seem to imagine; on the contrary, it is a matter of the utmost indifference to me; as I have long foreseen that a division must necessarily ensue, from causes so various, unavoidable, and certain, that I have long since given over all thoughts and hopes of settling it on a permanent foundation. You do not seem to be aware of the most effective cause that will bring about a division. You apprehend the most serious consequences from a struggle between the preachers for power and pre-eminence, and there being none among them of sufficient authority or abilities to support the dignity, or command the respect and exact the implicit obedience, which is so necessary to uphold our constitution on its present

principles. This is one thing that will operate very powerfully against unity in the connexion, and is, perhaps, what I might possibly have prevented, had not a still greater difficulty arisen in my mind: I have often wished for some person of abilities to succeed me as the head of the church I have with such indefatigable pains and astonishing success established; but convinced that none but very superior abilities would be equal to the undertaking, was I to adopt a successor of this description, I fear he might gain so much influence among the people as to usurp a share, if not the whole, of that absolute and uncontrollable power, which I have hitherto, and am determined I will maintain so long as I live; never will I bear a rival near my throne.—You, no doubt, see the policy of continually changing the preachers from one circuit to another at short periods: for should any of them become popular with their different congregations, and insinuate themselves into the favour of their hearers, they might possibly obtain such influence as to establish themselves independently of me and the general connexion. Besides, the novelty of the continual change excites curiosity, and is the more necessary, as few of our preachers have abilities to render themselves in any degree tolerable any longer than they are new.

"The principal cause which will inevitably effect a diminution and division in the connexion after my death, will be the failure of subscriptions and contributions towards the support of the cause; for money is as much the sinews of religious as of military power. If it is with the greatest difficulty that even I can keep them together, for want of this very necessary article, I think no one else can. Another cause which, with others, will effect the division, is the disputes and contentions that will arise between the preachers and the parties that will espouse the several causes, by which means much truth will be brought to light, which will reflect so much to their

disadvantage, that the eyes of the people will be opened to see their motives and principles, nor will they any longer contribute to their support, when they find all their pretensions to sanctity and love are founded on motives of interest and ambition. The consequence of which will be, a few of the most popular will establish themselves in the respective places where they have gained sufficient influence over the minds of the people; the rest must revert to their original humble callings. But this no way concerns me: I have obtained the object of my views, by establishing a name that will not soon perish from the face of the earth; I have founded a sect which will boast my name long after my discipline and doctrines are forgotten.

"My character and reputation for sanctity are now beyond the reach of calumny; nor will anything that may hereafter come to light, or be said concerning me, to my prejudice, however true, gain credit.

'My unsoil'd name, th' austereness of my life,
Will vouch against it,
And so the accusation overweigh,
That it will stifle in its own report,
And smell of calumny.'

"Another cause that will operate more powerfully and effectually than any of the preceding, is the ray of philosophy which begins now to pervade all ranks, rapidly dispelling the mists of ignorance, which has been long in a great degree the mother of devotion, of slavish prejudice, and the enthusiastic bigotry of religious opinions: the decline of the Papal power is owing to the same irresistible cause, nor can it be supposed that Methodism can stand its ground, when brought to the test of truth, reason, and philosophy.

"I am, &c.

"I. W."

"City Road, Thursday Morning."

Our author informs us that the following was written to a very amiable and accomplished lady some years ago. The lady was about three-and-twenty years of age.

"MADAM,

"IT is with the utmost diffidence I presume to address superior excellence: emboldened by a violent yet virtuous passion, kindled by the irresistible rays, and encouraged by the sweetly attractive force, of transcendant beauty, the elegant simplicity of your manners, the fascinating melody of your voice, and above all, the inexpressible fire of an eye, that the extravagance of the Muses has given to the goddess of love, but which Nature has bestowed on you alone.

'They sparkle with the right Promethean fire!'

"Believe me, my dear madam, this is not the language of romance, but the genuine exuberant effusions of an enraptured soul. The impression of your charms was no less instantaneous than irresistible: when first I saw you, so forcibly was I struck with admiration and love of your divine perfections, that my soul was filled with sensations so wild and extravagant, yet delightful and pure!—But I will not indulge in declaring what are my real sentiments, lest I should incur a suspicion of flattery. Your mind, superior to fulsome panegyric, unsusceptible of the incense of affected adulation, would, with just indignation, spurn at those impertinent compliments, which are commonly offered with a view to impose upon the vanity and credulity of the weaker part of your sex: I will not attempt it: but confine myself to the dictates of sincerity and truth, nor shall a compliment escape my pen that is not the sentiment of a devoted heart.

"As beauty has no positive criterion, and fancy alone directs the judgment and influences the choice,

we find different people see it in various lights, forms, and colours; I may therefore, without a suspicion of flattery, declare that, in my eye, you are the most agreeable object, and most perfect work of created nature: nor does your mind seem to partake less of the divinity than your person.

'I view thee over with a lover's eye;
No fault hast thou, or I no fault can spy.'

"The reason I did not before declare myself, was the profound and respectful distance I thought it became me to observe, from a conscious sense of my own comparative unworthiness to approach, much less to hope for favour from, the quintessence of all female perfection. Forgive me, my dear Eliza, and compassionate a heart too deeply impressed with your divine image ever to be erased by time, nor can any power, but the cold hand of death, ever obliterate from my mind the fond imagination and sweet remembrance of Eliza's charms! Nor can even death itself divide the union that subsists between kindred souls.

"Yesterday, my dear Eliza, the charms of your conversation detained me too late to meet the penitents, as I had promised to do; but

'With thee conversing, I forget
All times, all seasons, and their change.'

"I hope however the disappointment of my company did not deprive them of a blessing.

"This being my birth-day, reflections on the revolution of years and the shortness of life, naturally intrude on my mind. I am now eighty-one years of age, and I thank God I enjoy the same vigour of constitution that I possessed at twenty-one! None of the infirmities that usually accompany years, either corporal or mental; and I think it not impossible that I may fulfil my hundred years, the residue of which shall be devoted to love and Eliza.

'I. W."

I sent a person to the author of the above pamphlet, to desire him to give me a sight of the original of the preceding letters; but he returned for answer, that he had sent them back to the persons to whom they were written; so that I cannot be certain as to their authenticity.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XXXII.

"Passion, 'tis true, may hurry us along;
Sometimes the just may deviate into wrong."
VOLTAIRE by Francklin.

DEAR FRIEND,

MY new wife's attachment to books was a very fortunate circumstance for us both, not only as it was a perpetual source of rational amusement, but also as it tended to promote my trade: her extreme love for books made her delight to be in the shop, so that she soon became perfectly acquainted with every part of it, and (as my stock increased) with other rooms where I kept books, and could readily get any article that was asked for. Accordingly, when I was out on business my shop was well attended. This constant attention and good usage procured me many customers, and I soon perceived that I could sell double and treble the quantity of books if I had a larger stock. But how to enlarge it I knew not, except by slow degrees, as my profits should enable me; for as I was almost a stranger in London, I had but few acquaintances, and these few were not of the opulent sort. I also saw that the town abounded with cheats, swindlers, &c., who obtained money and other pro-

perty under false pretences, of which the credulous were defrauded, which often prevented me from endeavouring to borrow, lest I should be suspected of having the same bad designs.

I was several times so hard put to it for cash to purchase parcels of books which were offered to me, that I more than once pawned my watch and a suit of clothes, and twice I pawned some books for money to purchase others.

Soon after I commenced bookseller I became acquainted with what Pope calls "the noblest work of God," an honest man. This was Mr John Dennis, an oilman in Cannon street (father of the present John Dennis, bookseller.) This gentleman had often visited me during my long illness, and having seen me tranquil and serene when on the very point of death, he formed a favourable conclusion that I too must be an honest man, as I had so quiet a conscience at such an awful period. Having retained these ideas of me after my recovery, and being perfectly well acquainted with my circumstances, he one day offered to become a partner in my business, and to advance money in proportion to my stock. This confidential offer I soon accepted: early in 1778 he became partner; and we very soon laid out his money in second-hand books, which increased the stock at once to double.

I soon after this proposed printing a sale catalogue, to which, after making a few objections, Mr Dennis consented. This catalogue of twelve thousand volumes (such as they were) was published in 1779. My partner's name was not in the title-page, the address was only "J. Lackington and Co., No. 46, Chiswell street." This our first publication produced very opposite effects on those who perused it; in some it excited much mirth, in others an equal proportion of anger. The major part of it was written by me, but Mr Dennis wrote many pages of it; and as his own private library consisted of scarce,

old, mystical and alchymical books, printed above a century ago, many of them in bad condition, this led him to insert *neat* in the catalogue to many articles, which were only neat when compared with such as were in very bad condition; so that when we produced such books as were called neat in our catalogue, we often got ourselves laughed at, and sometimes our neat articles were heartily damned. We had also a deal of trouble on another score: Mr Dennis inserted a number of articles without the authors' names, and assured me that the books were well known, and to mention the authors was often useless. The fact was, Mr Dennis knew who wrote those articles; but was soon convinced that many others did not, as we were often obliged to produce them merely to let our customers see who were the authors. We however took twenty pounds the first week the books were on sale, which we thought a large sum. The increase of our stock augmented our customers in proportion, so that Mr Dennis, finding that his money turned to a better account in bookselling than in the funds, very soon lent the stock near two hundred pounds, which I still turned to a good account. We went on very friendly and prosperously for little more than two years; when one night Mr Dennis hinted that he thought I was making purchases too fast, on which I grew warm, and reminded him of an article in our partnership agreement, by which I was to be sole purchaser, and was at liberty to make what purchases I should judge proper. I also reminded him of the profits which my purchases produced, and he reminded me of his having more money in the trade than I had. We were indeed both very warm; and on my saying, that if he was displeased with any part of my conduct, he was at liberty to quit the partnership, he in great warmth replied that he would. The above passed at Mr Dennis's house in Hoxton square; I then bade him good night. When Mr Dennis called at the shop the

next day, he asked me if I continued in the same mind I was in the preceding night? I assured him that I did. He then demanded of me whether I insisted on his keeping his word to quit the partnership? I replied, I did not insist on it, as I had taken him a partner for three years, nearly one third part of which time was unexpired; but I added, that as I had always found him strictly a man of his word, I supposed he would prove himself so in the present instance, and not assert one thing at night and another in the morning. On which he observed, that as he was not provided with a shop, he must take some time to look for one. I told him that he might take as long a time as he thought necessary. This was in March 1780. He appointed the twentieth of May following. On that day we accordingly dissolved the partnership; and, as he had more money in the trade than myself, he took my notes for what I was deficient, which was a great favour done to me. We parted in great friendship, which continued to the day of his death; he generally called every morning to see us, and learn our concerns, and we constantly informed him of all that had passed the preceding day; as how much cash we had taken, what were the profits, what purchases we had made, what bills we had to pay, &c., and he sometimes lent me money to help to pay them.

At his death he left behind him in his private library the best collection of scarce valuable mystical and alchymical books that ever was collected by one person. In his lifetime he prized these kind of books above everything; in collecting them he never cared what price he paid for them. This led him to think, after he became a bookseller, that other book-collectors should pay their money as freely as he had done his, which was often a subject of debate between him and me, as I was for selling everything cheap, in order to secure those customers already obtained, as well as increase their numbers.

In Selden's Table Talk is the following odd passage: "The giving a bookseller his price for his books has this advantage: he that will do so shall have the refusal of whatsoever comes to his hand and so by that means get many things which otherwise he never should have seen." He adds, "So it is in giving a bawd her own price." But I hope he did not mean to compare the booksellers to old bawds. Different professions are oddly jumbled together in the following lines:

"No surgeon will extract a tooth,
No strumpet exercise her trade,
No parson preach eternal truth,
Where not a sixpence can be made."

Mr Dennis was, at the time of his death, about fifty years of age. He informed me that in his childhood and youth he was weakly to an extreme, so that no one who knew him ever thought he could live to be twenty years of age; however, he enjoyed an uninterrupted state of health for nearly the last forty years of his life; this he ascribed to his strictly adhering to the rules laid down by Cornaro and Tryon in their books on Health, Long Life, and Happiness. His unexpected death was in consequence of a fever caught by sitting in a cold damp room.

"O'er the sad reliques of each friend sincere,
The happiest mortal, sure, may spare a tear."

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XXXIII.

" There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries:
On such a foul sea are we now afloat,
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures." SHAKSPEARE's Julius Cæsar.

DEAR FRIEND,

IT was some time in the year seventeen hundred and eighty, when I resolved from that period to give no person whatever any credit. I was induced to make this resolution from various motives: I had observed, that where credit was given, most bills were not paid within six months, many not within a twelve-month, and some not within two years. Indeed, many tradesmen have accounts of seven years' standing; and some bills are never paid. The losses sustained by the interest of money in long credits, and by those bills that were not paid at all; the inconveniences attending not having the ready money to lay out in trade to the best advantage, together with the great loss of time in keeping accounts, and collecting debts, convinced me, that if I could but establish a ready-money business, without any exceptions, I should be enabled to sell every article very cheap.

" Let all the learn'd say all they can,
'Tis ready money makes the man."

When I communicated my ideas on this subject to some of my acquaintances, I was much laughed at and ridiculed; and it was thought that I might as well attempt to rebuild the tower of Babel, as to establish a large business without giving credit. But, notwith-

standing this discouragement, and even *you*, my dear friend, expressing your doubts of the practicability of my scheme, I determined to make the experiment; and began by plainly marking in every book facing the title the lowest price that I would take for it; which being much lower than the common market prices, I not only retained my former customers, but soon increased their numbers. But, my dear sir, you can scarce imagine what difficulties I encountered for several years together. I even sometimes thought of relinquishing this my favourite scheme altogether, as by it I was obliged to deny credit to my very acquaintance; I was also under a necessity of refusing it to the most respectable characters, as no exception was or now is made, not even in favour of nobility; my porters being strictly enjoined, by one general order, to bring back all books not previously paid for, except they receive the amount on delivery. Again, many in the country found it difficult to remit small sums that were under bankers' notes, (which difficulty is now done away, as all post-masters receive small sums of money, and give drafts for the same on the post-office in London;) and others to whom I was a stranger, did not like to send the money first, as not knowing how I should treat them, and suspecting by the price of the articles, there must certainly be some deception. Many unacquainted with my plan of business, were much offended, until the advantages accruing to them from it were duly explained, when they very readily acceded to it. As to the anger of such, who though they were acquainted with it, were still determined to deal on credit only, I considered that as of little consequence, from an opinion that some of them would have been as much enraged when their bills were sent in, had credit been given them.

I had also difficulties of another nature to encounter; when first I began to sell very cheap, many came to my shop prepossessed against my goods, and of course often saw faults where none existed; so that the

best editions were merely from prejudice deemed very bad editions, and the best bindings said to be inferior workmanship, for no other reason but because I sold them so cheap; and I often received letters from the country, to know if such and such articles were *really* as I stated them in my catalogues, and if they *really* were the best editions; if *really* in calf; and *really* elegantly bound; with many other *reallys*. Oh, my friend! I really was afraid for some years that I should be really mad with vexation. But these letters of *reallys* have for years happily ceased, and the public are now really and thoroughly convinced that I will not assert in my catalogues what is not *really* true. But imagine, if you can, what I must have felt, on hearing the very best of goods depreciated, on no other account whatever, but because they were not charged at a higher price!

It is also worth observing, that there were not wanting among the booksellers, some who were mean enough to assert that all my books were bound in sheep; and many other unmanly artifices were practised; all of which so far from injuring me, as basely intended, turned to my account; for when gentlemen were brought to my shop by their friends, to purchase some trifling article, or were led into it by curiosity, they were often very much surprised to see many thousands of volumes in elegant and superb bindings. The natural conclusion was, that if I had not held forth to the public better terms than others, I should not have been so much envied and misrepresented.

——— "To Malice, sure, I'm much oblig'd,
On every side by Calumny besieg'd;
Yet Envy I could almost call thee friend."

So that whether I am righteous or not, all these afflictions have worked together for my good. But, I assure you, that my temporal salvation was not effected without "conditions." As every envious transaction was to me an additional spur to exertion

I am therefore not a little indebted to Messrs Envy, Detraction, and Co., for my present prosperity; though I assure you this is the only debt I am determined not to pay. Green says,

"Happy the man who innocent,
Grieves not at ills he can't prevent
And when he can't prevent foul play,
Enjoys the follies of the fray." SPLEEN.

I am dear friend, yours

LETTER XXXIV.

"Constant at shop and 'Change, his gains were sure:
His givings rare; save halfpence to the poor."

DEAR FRIEND,

IN the first three years after I refused to give credit to any person, my business increased much, and as the whole of my profit (after paying all expenses) was laid out in books, my stock was continually enlarged, so that my catalogues in the year seventeen hundred and eighty-four were very much augmented in size. The first contained twelve thousand, and the second thirty thousand volumes: this increase was not merely in numbers, but also in value, as a very great part of these volumes was better, that is, books of a higher price. But notwithstanding the great increase of my business, I still met with many difficulties on account of my selling books cheap; one of these, I confess, I did not foresee: as the more convinced the public were of my acting strictly conformable to the plan I had adopted, the more this objection gained ground, and even to this day is not entirely done away. This difficulty was, in making private pur-

chases of libraries and parcels of books, many of my customers for several years had no objection to buying of me because I sold cheap; but were not equally inclined to sell me such books as they had no use for, or libraries that were left them at the death of relations, &c. They reasoned (very plausibly, it must be confessed) thus: "Lackington sells very cheap; he therefore will not give much for what is offered him for sale. I will go to those who sell very dear; as the more they sell their books for, the more they can afford to give for them."

This mode of reasoning, however specious it seems at first, will on due reflection appear nugatory and erroneous, for the following reasons:

I believe no one ever knew or heard of a covetous man that would sell his goods cheap: but every one has heard of such characters selling very dear; and when a covetous person makes a purchase, is it likely that he should offer a generous price? Is he not, when buying, influenced by the same avaricious disposition as when selling? And, on the other hand, I cannot help thinking (I am aware of the inference) that one who has been constantly selling cheap for a series of years must possess some degree of generosity: that this disposition has prevailed in me when I have been called to purchase, and when libraries or parcels of books have been sent to me, thousands in the three kingdoms can witness. And, however paradoxical it may appear, I will add, that I can afford to give more for books now, than I could if I sold them much dearer. For, were I to sell them dear, I should be ten times longer in selling them; and the expenses for warehouse room, insurance from fire, together with the interest of the money lying long in a dead stock, would prevent my giving a large price when books were offered for sale.

But it did not appear in this point of view to the public in the more early stages of my business, until being often sent for after other booksellers had made

offers for libraries, and finding that I would give more than they had offered, it was communicated from one to another until it became publicly known: and the following method, which I adopted some years since, has put the matter beyond the shadow of a doubt:

When I am called upon to purchase any library or parcel of books, either myself or my assistants carefully examine them, and if desired to fix a price, I mention at a word the utmost that I will give for them, which I always take care shall be as much as any bookseller can afford to give: but if the seller entertains any doubts respecting the price offered, and chooses to try other booksellers, he pays me five per cent. for valuing the books; and as he knows what I have valued them at, he tries among the trade, and when he finds that he cannot get any greater sum offered, on returning to me he not only receives the price I at first offered, but also a return of the five per cent. which was paid me for the valuation.

But to such as fix a price on their own books I make no charge (if in, or very near town), either taking them at the price at which they are offered to me, or, if that appear too much, immediately declining the purchase.

This equitable mode I have the pleasure to find has given the public the utmost satisfaction.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XXXV.

" Behold, sir Balaam, now a man of spirit,
Ascribes his gettings to his parts and merit." POPE.

" Weak truth cannot your reputation save,
The knaves will all agree to call you knave:
Wrong'd shall he live, insulted o'er, opprest,
Who dares be less a villain than the rest."
SATIRE AGAINST MAN.

DEAR FRIEND,

WHEN I was first initiated into the various manœuvres practised by booksellers, I found it customary among them, (which practice still continues,) that when any books had not gone off so rapidly as expected, or so fast as to pay for keeping them in store, they would put what remained of such articles into private sales, where only booksellers are admitted, and of them only such as were invited by having a catalogue sent them. At one of these sales, I have frequently seen seventy or eighty thousand volumes sold after dinner, including books of every description, good, bad, and indifferent; by this means they were distributed through the trade.

When first invited to these trade sales, I was very much surprised to learn that it was common for such as purchased remainders to destroy one half or three fourths of such books, and to charge the full publication price, or nearly that, for such as they kept on hand; and there was a kind of standing order amongst the trade, that, in case any one was known to sell articles under the publication price, such a person was to be excluded from trade sales; so blind were copyrightholders to their own interest.

For a short time I cautiously complied with this

custom; but I soon began to reflect that many of these books so destroyed possessed much merit, and only wanted to be better known; and that if others were not worth six shillings they were worth three, or two, and so in proportion, for higher or lower-priced books.

From that time I resolved not to destroy any books that were worth saving, but to sell them off at half, or a quarter, of the publication prices. By selling them in this cheap manner I have disposed of many hundred thousand volumes, many thousands of which have been intrinsically worth their original prices. This part of my conduct, however, though evidently highly beneficial to the community, and even to booksellers, created me many enemies among the trade; some of the meaner part of whom, instead of employing their time and abilities in attending to the increase of their own business aimed at reducing mine; and by a variety of pitiful insinuations and dark inuendoes, strained every nerve to injure the reputation I had already acquired with the public, determined (as they wisely concluded) thus to effect my ruin; which indeed they daily prognosticated, with a demon-like spirit, must inevitably very speedily follow. This conduct however was far from intimidating me, as the effect proved directly opposite to what they wished for and expected, and I found the respect and confidence of the public continually increasing, which added very considerably to the number of my customers: it being an unquestionable fact that, before I adopted this plan, great numbers of persons were very desirous of possessing some particular books, for which however (from various motives) they were not inclined to pay the original price; as some availed themselves of the opportunity of borrowing from a friend, or from a circulating library, or having once read them, though they held the works in esteem, might deem them too dear to purchase; or they might have a copy by them, which from their own

and family's frequent use (or lending to friends) might not be in so good a condition as they could wish, though rather than purchase them again at the full price they would keep those they had; or again, they might be desirous to purchase them to make presents of, or they might have a commission from a correspondent in the country, or abroad, and wish to gain a small profit on the articles for their trouble, not to mention the great numbers that would have been given to the poor.

Thousands of others have been effectually prevented from purchasing, (though anxious so to do) whose circumstances in life would not permit them to pay the full price, and thus were totally excluded from the advantage of improving their understandings, and enjoying a rational entertainment. And you may be assured that it affords me the most pleasing satisfaction, independent of the emoluments which have accrued to me from this plan, when I reflect what prodigious numbers in inferior or reduced situations of life have been essentially benefited in consequence of being thus enabled to indulge their natural propensity for the acquisition of knowledge on easy terms: nay, I could almost be vain enough to assert, that I have thereby been highly instrumental in diffusing that general desire for reading now so prevalent among the inferior orders of society, which most certainly, though it may not prove equally instructive to all, keeps them from employing their time and money, if not to bad, at least to less rational purposes.

How happy should I have deemed myself in the earlier stage of my life, if I could have met with the opportunity which every one capable of reading may now enjoy, of obtaining books at so easy a rate: had that been the case, the catalogue of my juvenile library, with which I presented you in a former letter, would have made a more respectable appearance, and I might possibly have been enabled when I purchased

Young's 'Night Thoughts' for a Christmas dinner, to have at the same time bought a joint of meat, and thus enjoyed both a mental and corporeal feast, as well as pleased my wife, (which I need not inform you the ladies say every good husband ought to do.) But after all, quere, whether if I had enjoyed such an advantage, should I ever have thought of commencing bookseller? If not, should I have been the great man I now feel myself, and hope you acknowledge me to be? In my next I will make a few observations on purchasing manuscripts, booksellers' liberality, authors turning publishers, &c.; in the meantime,

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XXXVI.

" High in the world of letters and of wit,
Enthron'd like Jove behold opinion sit !
As symbols of her sway, on either hand
Th' unfailing urns of praise and censure stand ;
Their mingled streams her motley servants shed
On each bold author's self-devoted head."

Dear Friend,

I promised in my last to give you a few remarks on purchasing manuscripts ; and as I seldom make such purchases, and but rarely publish any new books, I think you may fairly credit me for impartiality. Nothing is more common than to hear authors complaining against publishers, for want of liberality in purchasing their manuscripts. But I cannot help thinking that most of these complaints are groundless ; and that, were all things considered, publishers (at least many of them) would be allowed to possess more liberality than any other set of tradesmen ; I

mean so far as relates to the purchasing manuscripts and copyright.

Not to trouble you with a long enumeration of instances in confirmation of this assertion, I shall barely mention the following:

It is owing to the encouragement of booksellers that the public is possessed of that valuable work Johnson's Dictionary: and the same liberality to the doctor in respect to that publication, his edition of Shakspeare and the English Poets, will always reflect honour on the parties. So sensible was the doctor of this, that he asserted booksellers were the best Mæcenases.

Pope, the late sir John Hawkins, Dr Cullen, Hume, Dr Hill, Dr Robertson, the present Mr Gibbon, &c. &c., are all striking instances of the truth of my observation.

As I feel a pleasure in mentioning acts of liberality wherever they occur, suffer me to quote the following passage from sir John Hawkins's Life of Dr Johnson:

"The booksellers with whom Mr Chambers had contracted for his dictionary, finding that the work succeeded beyond their expectations, made him a voluntary present of, I think, five hundred pounds. Other instances of the like generosity have been known of a profession of men, who, in the debates on the question of literary property, have been described as scandalous monopolizers, fattening at the expense of other men's ingenuity, and growing opulent by oppression." He also says, that Dr Hill earned in one year one thousand five hundred pounds by his pen.

The late Mr Elliot, bookseller, of Edinburgh, gave Mr Smellie a thousand pounds for his Philosophy of Natural History, when only the heads of the chapters were wrote. Hume received only two hundred pounds for one part of the History of Britain, but for the remainder of that work he had five thousand.

Dr Robertson was paid for his History of Scotland but six hundred pounds, but for his Charles V he received four thousand five hundred pounds. Dr Blair obtained the highest price for Sermons that ever was given; they were purchased by Mr Cadell in the Strand, and Mr Creech of Edinburgh; and after the first two volumes of these sermons were published, Dr Blair was farther rewarded from another quarter with a pension of two hundred a-year; Sherlock's sermons had a very great sale, as had Dr White's and many others, but none ever sold so well as Dr Blair's, and the sale of them is still as great as ever.

It is confidently asserted, that the late Dr Hawkesworth received six thousand pounds for his compilation of Voyages; if so (and I have never heard it contradicted) I leave it to any considerate person to judge, whether in paying so enormous a price the publishers did not run a great risk, when it is considered how great the expenses of bringing forward such a work must have been. I have also been informed that David Mallet, esq. was offered two thousand pounds for lord Bolingbroke's Philosophical Works, which he refused.

A very few years since, Mr R—— was paid sixteen hundred pounds to do a work, which he died without performing, and the money being spent, it was not recoverable. Before Dr Rees engaged to revise and improve Chambers's Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, very large sums for that purpose had from time to time been obtained from the proprietors, by persons who never fulfilled their engagements.

It ought also to be considered, that frequently the money which is paid for the copy is but trifling compared with the expense of printing, paper, advertising, &c., and hundreds of instances may be adduced of publishers having sustained very great losses, and many have been made bankrupts, through their liberality in purchasing manuscripts and publishing them; and on the other hand, it must be acknow-

ledged that some publishers have made great fortunes by their copyrights, but their number is comparatively small.

I have been told of booksellers who frequently offer as low as half-a-guinea per volume for novels in manuscript; it is a shocking price to be sure, but it should be remembered that as there are some of the trade who are mean enough to wish to obtain valuable copyrights for nothing; so, on the other hand, many novels have been offered to booksellers—indeed many have actually been published that were not worth the expense of paper and printing, so that the copyright was dear at any price; and it should be remarked, that authors in general are apt to form too great expectations from their productions, many instances of which I could give you, but I will only produce one.

A gentleman, a few years since, shewed a manuscript to a publisher, which he refused to purchase, but offered to be the publisher if the gentleman would print it, &c. at his own expense, which he readily agreed to do; the publisher then desired to know how many copies should be printed, on which the gentleman began to compute how many families there were in Great Britain, and assured the publisher that every family would at least purchase one copy; but the publisher not being of the same opinion, our author then said that he would print sixty thousand copies *only*, but added, he was afraid that another edition could not be got ready as soon as it would be wanted. However, after a long debate, the publisher prevailed on him to print only twelve hundred and fifty instead of sixty thousand, but promised in case another edition should be wanted in haste, to make the printers work night and day, in order not to disappoint the public. This work was soon afterwards published and advertised at a great rate, and for a long time, but to the infinite mortification of our author not one hundred copies were sold, not even

enough indeed to pay for the advertisements. In the preceding instance I am persuaded the publisher did his best to promote the sale of the work; but in general where authors keep their own copyright they do not succeed, and many books have been consigned to oblivion through the inattention and mismanagement of publishers, as most of them are envious of the success of such works as do not turn to their own account; very many just complaints are made on this head, so that I am fully of opinion that for authors to succeed well they should sell their copyrights, or be previously well acquainted with the characters of their publishers.

Many works may be mentioned that never sold well whilst the author retained the copyright, which sold rapidly after the copyright was sold to the trade; and no wonder, for if the publisher wishes to purchase the copyright, he sometimes will take care to prevent the sale of it, in order to make the author out of conceit with the book, and be willing to part with the copyright for a mere trifle; but this is only true of some publishers: I am sorry that any such should be found, but I am sure as to the fact.

As I have before observed, there are some authors who become their own publishers, but that mode will seldom or never answer, as fifty to one might be sold by being exposed to view, and recommended in booksellers' shops, where ladies and gentlemen are continually calling to purchase some books, and to turn over others, and often by dipping into publications are led to purchase such as they had no intention to buy. But authors should be reminded that there are many who would not go to private houses to look over books when they are not certain to purchase, and where, if they do purchase, they are to take them home in their pockets, or be at the trouble of sending for them, which is not the case when they purchase at a bookseller's shop. And all authors should be sure to give the full allowance to the trade,

or their works can never have a great sale, as no bookseller can reasonably be expected to promote the sale of a work in which he is abridged of his usual profits; and the more liberality authors exercise towards the trade the greater will be their profits in the end. For it is inconceivable what mischief booksellers can and often will do to authors, as thousands of books are yearly written for to London that are never sent; and in these cases many plausible reasons are assigned by them for such omissions—As, "The book is too dear, or it is out of print; the author is scarcely ever at home; he gives too much trouble; he does not keep his work bound, or sewed; he is gone from his former lodging, and no one knows where to find him; the work is not worth your purchasing; such a one has wrote much better on the subject," &c. &c. And in such cases what redress can an author have for so essential an injury?

I am, dear friend, yours

LETTER XXXVII.

" Books, of all earthly things my chief delight;
My exercise by day, and dreams by night;
Dispassion'd masters, friends without deceit,
Who flatter not; companions ever sweet;
With whom I'm always cheerful, from whom rise,
Improv'd and better, if not good and wise;
Grave, faithful counsellors, who all excite,
Instruct and strengthen to behave aright;
Admonish us, when fortune makes her court,
And, when she's absent, solace and support.
Happy the man to whom ye are well known,
'Tis his own fault if ever he's alone." ANONYMOUS.

DEAR FRIEND,

ALTHOUGH the result of the plan which I adopted for reducing the price of books, as mentioned in my last, was a vast increase of purchasers, yet at the same time I found a prodigious accumulation of my expenses, which will not appear strange, when I inform you, that I made proportionably large purchases, such as two hundred copies of one book, three hundred of another, five hundred of a third, a thousand of a fourth, two thousand of a fifth, nay, sometimes I have purchased six thousand copies of one book, and at one time I actually had no less than ten thousand copies of Watts's Psalms, and the same number of his Hymns, in my possession. In addition to these I purchased very large numbers of many thousand different articles at trade sales of all sorts, as bankrupt sales, sales of such as had retired from business, others caused by the death of booksellers, sales to reduce large stocks, annual sales, &c. That you may form some idea, I must inform you that at one of the above sales I have purchased books to the amount of five thousand pounds in one afternoon. Not to mention those purchased of authors, and town

and country booksellers, by private contract, &c., to a very considerable amount. My expenses were also exceedingly increased by the necessity I was under of keeping each article in a variety of different kinds of bindings, to suit the various tastes of my customers: besides paying my bills for the above, I was always obliged to find ready money to pay for libraries and parcels of second-hand books, which after a while poured in upon me from town and country; so that I often look back with astonishment at my courage (or temerity, if you please) in purchasing, and my wonderful success in taking money sufficient to pay the extensive demands that were perpetually made upon me, as there is not another instance of success so rapid and constant under such circumstances. Some indeed there have been, who for two or three years purchased away very fast, but could not persevere, as they were unable to sell with equal rapidity: for no one that has not a quick sale can possibly succeed with large numbers. For, supposing that a bookseller expends a thousand pounds in the purchase of four articles (I have often done that in only one article) and these are bought at a quarter the usual price, the interest of the money is fifty pounds a-year; besides which some allowance must be made for warehouse room, insurance from fire, &c., so that granting he might sell a few of each article every year at four times the price he first paid for them, yet if he does not sell enough to pay the interest and other expenses of those that remain, he is, after all, on the losing side; which has been the case with the major part of such as have purchased a large number of one book; and I have known many instances of booksellers purchasing articles at a quarter the price, and selling them at the full price, and yet have not had two per cent. for their money.

For several years together I thought I should be obliged to desist from purchasing a large number of any one article; for although by not giving any

credit I was enabled to sell very cheap, yet the heavy stock of books in sheets often disheartened me, so that I more than once resolved to leave off purchasing all such articles where the number was very large. But, somehow or other, a torrent of business suddenly poured in upon me on all sides, so that I very soon forgot my resolution of not making large purchases, and now find my account in firmly adhering to that method; and being universally known for making large purchases, most of the trade in town and country, and also authors of every description, are continually furnishing me with opportunities. In this branch of trade it is next to impossible for me to have any formidable rivals, as it requires an uncommon exertion, as well as very uncommon success, and that for many years together, to rise to any great degree of eminence in that particular line. This success must be attained too without the aid of novelty, which I found to be of very great service to me: and should any person begin on my plan and succeed extremely well, he could never supersede me, as I am still enlarging my business every year, and the more it is extended the cheaper I can afford to sell; so that though I may be pursued, I cannot be overtaken, except I should (as some others have done) be so infatuated and blinded by prosperity, as to think that the public would continue their favours, even though the plan of business were reversed. But as the first king of Bohemia kept his country shoes by him, to remind him from whence he was taken, I have put a motto on the doors of my carriage, constantly to remind me to what I am indebted for my prosperity, viz.

"SMALL PROFITS DO GREAT THINGS."

And I assure you, sir, that reflecting on the means by which I have been enabled to support a carriage adds not a little to the pleasure of riding in it. I believe I may, without being deemed censorious, assert, that there are some who ride in their carriages who can-

not reflect on the means by which they were acquired with an equal degree of satisfaction.

" If splendour charm not, yet avoid the scorn
That treads on lowly stations, think of some
Assiduous booby mounting o'er your head,
And thence with saucy grandeur looking down;
Think of (reflection's stab!) the pitying friend,
With shoulder shrugg'd, and sorry. Think that time
Has golden minutes, if discreetly seiz'd.
Riches and fame are industry's reward.
The nimble runner courses fortune down,
And then he banquets, for she feeds the bold."

DR SNEYD DAVIES TO F. CORNWALLIS.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XXXVIII.

" Those who would learning's glorious kingdom find,
The dear-bought treasure of the trading mind,
From many dangers must themselves acquit,
And more than Sylla and Carybdis meet.
Oh! what an ocean must be voyaged o'er,
To gain a prospect of the shining store!
Resisting rocks oppose th' enquiring soul,
And adverse waves retard it as they roll.
The little knowledge now which man obtains,
From outward objects and from sense he gains,
He like a wretched slave must plod and sweat,
By day must toil, by night that toil repeat;
And yet, at last, what little fruit he gains—
A beggar's harvest glean'd with mighty pains!"

POMFRET.

DEAR FRIEND,

IT has been asked, times innumerable, how I acquired any tolerable degree of knowledge, so as to enable me to form any ideas of the merits or demerits of books, or how I became sufficiently acquainted with the prices that books were commonly sold for, so as to

be able to buy and sell, particularly books in the learned and foreign languages. Many have thought that from the beginning I always kept shopmen to furnish me with instructions necessary to carry on my business; but you and all my old friends and acquaintances well know that not to have been the case; as for the first thirteen years after I became a bookseller I never had one shopman who knew anything of the worth of books, or how to write a single page of catalogue properly, much less to compile the whole. I always wrote them myself, so long as my health would permit: indeed I continued the practice for years after my health was much impaired by too constant an application to that and reading; and when I was at last obliged to give up writing them, I for several catalogues stood by and dictated to others; even to the present time I take some little part in their compilation; and as I ever did I still continue to fix the price to every book that is sold in my shop, except such articles as are both bought and sold again while I am out of town. I have now many assistants in my shop, who buy, sell, and in short transact the major part of my business.

As to the little knowledge of literature I possess, it was acquired by dint of application. In the beginning I attached myself very closely to the study of divinity and moral philosophy, so that I became tolerably acquainted with all the points controverted between divines; after having read the great champions for Christianity, I next read the works of Toulmin, lord Herbert, Tindal, Chub, Morgan, Collins, Hammond, Woolston, Annet, Mandeville, Shaftesbury, D'Argens, Bolingbroke, Williams, Helvetius, Voltaire, and many other free-thinkers. I have also read most of our English poets, and the best translations of the Greek and Latin classics, and also of the Italian and French poets; nor did I omit to read history, voyages, travels, natural history, biography, &c

" Survey the globe, each ruder realm explore,
From reason's faintest ray to Newton soar;
What different spheres to human bliss assign'd!
What slow gradations in the scale of mind.
Yet mark in each these mystic wonders wrought,
Oh mark the sleepless energies of thought!"

PLEASURES OF MEMORY.

At one time I had a strong inclination to learn French, but as soon as I was enabled to make out and abridge title-pages, so as to insert them right in my catalogues, I left off for what appeared to me more pleasing as well as more necessary pursuits; reflecting that as I began so late in life, and had probably but a very short period to live, (and I paid some regard to what Helvetius has asserted, viz. that "No man acquires any new ideas after he is forty-five years of age.") I had no time to bestow on the attainment of languages.

" 'Tis weak in any man to lavish pains,
And rifle and confound his brains."

I therefore contented myself with reading all the translations of the classics, and inserted the originals in my catalogues as well as I could; and when sometimes I happened to put the genitive or dative case instead of the nominative or accusative, my customers kindly considered this as a venial fault, which they readily pardoned, and bought the books notwithstanding.

As I have indefatigably used my best endeavours to acquire knowledge, I never thought I had the smallest reason to be ashamed on account of my deficiency, especially as I never made pretensions to erudition, or affected to possess what I knew I was deficient in. "A bookseller (says Mr Paterson in his Joineriana) is in general a bad judge of everything—but his stupidity shines most conspicuously in that particular branch of knowledge by which he is to get his

bread." Dr Young's couplet you will therefore think equally applicable to many others as well as myself:

"Unlearned men of books assume the care,
As eunuchs are the guardians of the fair."
LOVE OF FAME.

I had like to have forgot to inform you that I have also read most of our best plays, and am so fond of the theatre, that in the winter season I have often been at Drury lane or Covent garden four or five evenings in a week.

"——— There cultivate my mind
With the soft thrillings of the tragic muse,
Divine Melpomene, sweet pity's nurse,
Queen of the stately step, and flowing pall.
Nor let Monimia mourn with streaming eyes,
Her joys incestuous, and polluted love:
Now let soft Juliet in the gaping tomb
Print the last kiss on her true Romeo's lips,
His lips yet reeking from the deadly draught.
Or Jaffier kneel for one forgiving look.
Nor seldom let the Moor on Desdemona
Pour the misguided threats of jealous rage.
By soft degrees the manly torrent steals
From my swoln eyes, and at a brother's woe
My big heart melts in sympathising tears.
What are the splendours of the gaudy court,
Its tinsel trappings, and its pageant pomps?
To me far happier seems the banish'd lord,
Amid Siberia's unrejoicing wilds." WARTON.

Another great source of amusement as well as knowledge I have met with in reading almost all the best novels; by the best, I mean those written by Cervantes, Fielding, Smollet, Richardson, Miss Burney, Voltaire, Marmontel, Sterne, Le Sage, Goldsmith, Mackenzie, Dr Moore, Green, C. Smith, Gunning, Lee, Reeves, Lennox, Radcliffe, and some others. And I have often thought, with Fielding, that some of those publications have given us a more genuine

history of man, in what are called romances, than is sometimes to be found under the more respectable titles of history, biography, &c.; I have indeed dipped into everything, as Dr Armstrong advises.

"Toy with your books, and as the various fits
Of humour seize you, from philosophy
To fable shift, from serious Antonine
To Rabelais' ravings, and from prose to song,
While reading pleases, but no longer read.
And read aloud resounding Homer's strains,
And wield the thunder of Demosthenes.
The chest so exercised, improves its thoughts,
And quick vibrations thro' the bowels drive
The restless blood, which in unactive days
Would loiter else, through unelastic tubes:
Deem it not trifling, while I recommend
What posture suits; to stand and sit by turns,
As nature prompts, is best, but o'er your leave
To lean for ever cramps the vital parts,
And robs the fine machinery of its play."

ART OF PRESERVING HEALTH.

In order to obtain some ideas in astronomy, geography, electricity, pneumatics, &c., I attended a few lectures given by the late eminent Mr Ferguson, the present very ingenious Mr Walker, and others; and for some time several gentlemen spent two or three evenings in a week at my house, for the purpose of improvement in science. At these meetings we made the best use of our time with globes, telescopes, microscopes, electrical machines, air pumps, air guns, a good bottle of wine, and other philosophical instruments——

The mention of which revives in my memory the loss I sustained by the premature death of a worthy philosophical friend, whom you have met when you occasionally did us the honour of making one of the evening party, and benefiting us by your instructions. I could say much in his praise, but shall forbear, as another friend, who was also one of this (I may truly

say) rational assembly, has composed what I think a just character of him, free from that fulsome panegyric which too often degrades those it is meant to celebrate, and conveys to all who knew the parties the idea of having been designed as a burlesque instead of an encomium; however, as you may not have seen it (though in print), and it will engross but a very little of your time to peruse, I shall here beg leave to insert it.

"With what surprise posterity shall see
A panegyric penn'd without a fee!"

"On Sunday, May 24, 1789, died at his house in Worship street, Moorfields, aged 50, Mr Ralph Tinley; one who had not dignity of birth or elevated rank in life to boast of, but who possessed what is far superior to either, a solid understanding, amiable manners, a due sense of religion, and an industrious disposition. Instead of riches Providence blessed him with a good share of health, and a mind contented with an humble situation. Those hours which he could spare from a proper attention to the duties of a husband and a father, and manual labour as a shoemaker, were incessantly employed in the improvement of his mind in various branches of science; in many of which he attained a proficiency, totally divested of that affectation of superiority which little minds assume. These qualities rendered him respected by all who knew him as an intelligent man and a most agreeable companion. Among other acquisitions, entomology was his peculiar delight. Thus far the prospect is pleasing. It is a painful task to add, that this amiable person fell a victim to an unhappy error in taking a medicine. The evening previous to his decease he spent in a philosophical society, of which he had many years been a member, and where his attendance had been constant; but finding himself indisposed, he in the morning early had recourse to a phial of antimonial wine, which

had long been in his possession, and of which only a small part remained. This, most unfortunately, he swallowed; and it having by long maceration acquired an extraordinary degree of strength, and being rendered turbid by mixing with the metallic particles, it produced the effect of a violent poison, occasioning almost instantaneous death. May his fate prove a warning to others to be careful how they venture to confide in their own judgment in so intricate a science as medicine!—His valuable cabinet of insects, both foreign and domestic, supposed to be one of the completest (of a private collection) in the kingdom, all scientifically arranged with peculiar neatness and in the finest preservation, will (if it falls into proper hands) remain a monument of his knowledge and application."—But to proceed.

My thirst was, and still is, so great for literature, that I could almost subscribe to the opinions of Herillus the philosopher, who placed in learning the sovereign good, and maintained that it was alone sufficient to make us wise and happy; others have said that "learning is the mother of all virtue, and that vice is produced from ignorance." Although that is not strictly true, yet I cannot help regretting the disadvantages I labour under by having been deprived of the benefits of an early education, as it is a loss that can scarcely be repaired in any situation. How much more difficult then was it for me to attain any degree of proficiency, when involved in the concerns of a large business?

> "Without a genius learning soars in vain,
> And without learning, genius sinks again;
> Their force united, crowns the sprightly reign.
>
> ELPHINSTON'S Horace.

The instructions that I received from men and books were often like the seeds sown among thorns, the cares of the world choaked them:

> "My head was full of household cares,
> And necessary dull affairs." LORD LYTTLETON.

So that although I understand a little of many branches of literature, yet my knowledge is, after all, I freely confess, but superficial; which indeed I need not have told you. As Montaigne said two hundred years ago, I may say now, "I have a smatch of everything, and nothing thoroughly *a-la-mode Française*. As to my natural parts, I often find them to bow under the burden; my fancy and judgment do but grope in the dark, staggering, tripping, and stumbling; and when I have gone as far as I can I am by no means satisfied; I see more land still before me, but so wrapped up in clouds, that my dim sight cannot distinguish what it is." However, superficial as it is, it affords me an endless source of pleasure.

"And books are still my highest joy,
These earliest please, and latest cloy."

SOAME JENYNS.

It has also been of very great use to me in business, as it enabled me to put a value on thousands of articles before I knew what such books were commonly sold at: 'tis true I was sometimes mistaken, and have sold a very great number of different articles much lower than I ought, even on my own plan of selling very cheap, yet that never gave me the least concern; but if I discovered that I had (as sometimes was the case) sold any articles too dear, it gave me much uneasiness; for whether I had any other motives I will leave to such as are acquainted with me to determine, but I reasoned thus: if I sell a book too dear, I perhaps lose that customer and his friends for ever, but if I sell articles considerably under their real value the purchaser will come again and recommend my shop to his acquaintances, so that from the principles of self-interest I would sell cheap; I always was inclined to reason in this manner, and nine years since a very trifling circumstance operated much upon my mind, and fully convinced me my

judgment was right on that head. Mrs Lackington had bought a piece of linen to make me some shirts; when the linendraper's man brought it into my shop three ladies were present, and on seeing the cloth opened, asked Mrs L. what it cost per yard; on being told the price, they all said it was very cheap, and each lady went and purchased the same quantity, to make shirts for their husbands; those pieces were again displayed to their acquaintances, so that the linendraper got a deal of custom from that very circumstance: and I resolved to do likewise. However trifling this anecdote may appear, you will pardon me for introducing it, when you reflect that it was productive of very beneficial consequences, and that many greater effects have arisen from as trivial causes. We are even told that sir Isaac Newton would probably never have studied the system of gravitation had he not been under an apple-tree when some of the fruit loosened from the branches and fell to the earth; it was the question of a simple gardener concerning a pump that led Galileo to study and discover the weight of the air. To the tones of a Welch harp are we indebted for the bard of Gray; and Gibbon formed the design of that truly great work, his History of the 'Decline of the Roman Empire,' while viewing the ruins of the Capitol.

"Lull'd in the countless chambers of the brain,
Our thoughts are link'd by many a hidden chain;
Awake but one, and lo, what myriads rise!
Each stamps its image as the other flies."

PLEASURES OF MEMORY.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XXXIX.

"—— Honest Englishmen, who never were abroad,
Like England only, and its taste applaud.
Strife still subsists, which yields the better gout;
Books or the world, the many or the few.
True taste to me is by this touchstone known,
That's always best that's nearest to my own."

MAN OF TASTE.

"In my Delia all endowments meet;
All that is just, agreeable, or sweet,
All that can praise and admiration move;
All that the wisest and the bravest love,
Her thoughts are manly, and sense refin'd."

POMFRET.

DEAR FRIEND,

IT has been long since remarked, that a person may be well acquainted with books, or, in other words, may be a very learned man, and yet remain almost totally ignorant of men and manners, as Mallet remarks of a famous divine:

"While Bentley, long to wrangling schools confin'd,
And but by books acquainted with mankind,
Dares, in the fulness of the pedant's pride,
—————————— Tho' no judge decide."

VERBAL CRITICISM.

Hence many fine chimerical systems of law, government, &c. have been spun out of the prolific brains of the learned, which have only served to amuse others as learned and as unacquainted with mankind as the authors, and have frequently produced a number of remarks, replies, observations, severe (not to say scurrilous) criticisms, and new systems and hypotheses; these again gave birth to fresh remarks, rejoinders, &c. *ad—infinitum*. These learned men,

after tiring themselves and the public, have generally left them just as wise on the subject as when they began, nay, often

> "From the same hand how various is the page;
> What civil war their brother pamphlets rage!
> Tracts battle tracts, self-contradictions glare."—YOUNG.

The reading and studying of history, voyages, travels, &c. will no doubt contribute much to that kind of knowledge, but will not alone be sufficient, in order to become a proficient in that useful branch of knowledge. "MAN, KNOW THYSELF!" was a precept of the ancient philosophers. But I can scarce think it possible for any man to be well acquainted with himself, without his possessing a tolerable degree of knowledge of the rest of mankind. In the former part of my life I saw a deal of what is called *low life*, and became acquainted with the customs, manners, dispositions, prejudices, &c. of the labouring part of the community, in various cities, towns, and villages; for years past I have spent some of my leisure hours among that class of people who are called opulent or genteel tradesmen; nor have I been totally excluded from higher circles. The middle station of life (says Hume) is the most favourable to the acquiring ot wisdom and ability, as well as of virtue, and a man so fortunate has a better chance of attaining a knowledge both of men and things, than those of a more elevated station. He enters with more familiarity into human life; everything appears in its natural colours before him; he has more leisure to form observations, and has besides the motive of ambition to push him on in his attainments, being certain that he can never rise to any distinction, or eminence in the world, without his own industry.

But among all the schools where the knowledge of mankind is to be acquired, I know of none equal to that of a bookseller's shop. A bookseller who has any taste in literature, may be said to feed his mind as

cooks' and butchers' wives get fat by the smell of meat. If the master is of an inquisitive and communicative turn, and is in a considerable line of business, his shop will then be a place of resort for men, women, and children, of various nations, and of more various capacities, dispositions, &c.

"Who there but wishes to prolong his stay,
And on those cases cast a ling'ring look;
For who to thoughtless ignorance a prey
Neglects to hold short dalliance with a book.
Reports attract the lawyer's parting eyes,
Novels Lord Fopling and Sir Plume require,
For songs and plays the voice of beauty cries;
And sense and nature Grandison desire."

To adduce a few instances by way of illustration:—Here you may find an old bawd inquiring for 'The Countess of Huntingdon's Hymn-book;' an old worn-out rake for 'Harris's List of Covent-garden Ladies;' simple Simon, for 'The Art of Writing Love-letters;' and Dolly for a Dream-book; the lady of true taste and delicacy wants 'Louisa Mathews;' and my lady's maid, 'Ovid's Art of Love;' a doubting Christian calls for 'The Crumbs of Comfort;' and a practical Antinomian for 'Eton's Honeycomb of Free Justification;' the pious churchwoman for 'The Week's Preparation;' and the Atheist for 'Hammond's Letter to Dr Priestly,' 'Toulmin's Eternity of the World,' and 'Hume's Dialogues on Natural Religion;' the mathematician for Sanderson's Fluxions;' and the beau, for 'The Toilet of Flora;' the courtier, for 'Macchiavel's Prince,' or 'Burke on the Revolution in France;' and a republican for 'Paine's Rights of Man;' the tap-room politician wants 'The History of Wat Tyler,' or of The Fisherman of Naples;' and an old Chelsea pensioner calls for 'The History of the Wars of glorious Queen Anne;' the critic calls for 'Bayle's Historical Dictionary,' 'Blair's Lectures,' 'Johnson's Lives of the

Poets, and the last month's reviews;' and my barber wants the 'Sessions Paper,' or the 'Trial of John the Painter;' the freethinker asks for 'Hume's Essays;' and the young student for 'Leland's View of Deistical Writers;' the fortuneteller wants 'Sibley's Translation of Placidus de Titus,' or 'Sanderson's Secrets of Palmistry;' and the sceptic wants 'Cornelius Agrippa's Vanity of the Arts and Sciences;' an old hardened sinner wants 'Bunyan's Good News for the vilest of Men;' and a moral Christian wants 'The Whole Duty of Man;' the Roman Catholic wants 'The Lives of the Saints;' the Protestant wants 'Fox's Book of Martyrs;' one asks for 'An Account of Animal Magnetism;' another for 'The Victorious Philosopher's Stone discovered;' one wants the 'Death of Abel;' another desires to have 'The Spanish Rogue;' one wants an 'Ecclesiastical History;' another, 'The Tyburn Chronicle;' one wants 'Johnson's Lives of the Highwaymen;' another wants 'Gibbon's Lives of Pious Women;' Miss W———h calls for 'Euclid in Greek;' and a young divine for 'Juliet Grenville, a novel;' and the philosopher dips into everything.

But it would be an endless task to set down the various and opposite articles that are constantly called for in my shop. To talk to these different pursuers after happiness, or amusement, has given me much pleasure, and afforded me some knowledge of mankind, and also of books; and to hear the debates that frequently occur between the different purchasers is a fine amusement; so that I have sometimes compared my shop to a stage. And I assure you that a variety of characters, strongly marked, constantly made their appearance.

> "Ye who push'd on by noble ardour aim
> In social life to gain immortal fame,
> Observe the various passions of mankind,
> Gen'ral, peculiar, single and combin'd,
> How youth from manhood differs in its views,
> And how old age still other paths pursues;

How zeal in Pricus nothing more than heats,
In Codex burns, and ruins all it meets;
How freedom now a lovely face shall wear,
Now shock us in the likeness of a bear;
How jealousy in some resembles hate,
In others seems but love grown delicate·
How modesty is often pride refin'd;
And virtue but the canker of the mind;
How love of riches, grandeur, life and fame,
Wear diff'rent shapes, and yet are still the same."

ESSAY ON CONVERSATION.

Would my health permit my constant attendance, I should prefer it to everything in life (reading excepted) and you may recollect that for some years I sought no other amusement whatever. It was at a bookseller's shop at Athens, that Zeno, after his great loss by shipwreck, found consolation in reading Xenophon: there he soon forgot his loss. Where (says he to the bookseller) do these sort of men live? The philosopher Crates was at the door, whom Zeno followed, and from that hour became his disciple.

Having been long habituated to make remarks on whatever I saw or heard, is another reason why I have succeeded so well in my business. I have for the last seven years successively told my acquaintances before the year began, how much money I should take in the course of it, without once failing of taking the sum mentioned. I formed my judgment by observing what kind of stock in trade I had in hand, and by considering how that stock was adapted to the different tastes and pursuits of the times; in doing this I was obliged to be pretty well informed of the state of politics in Europe, as I have always found that bookselling is much affected by the political state of affairs. For as mankind are in search of amusement, they often embrace the first that offers; so that if there is anything in the newspapers of consequence, that draws many to the coffee-house, where they chat away the evenings, instead of visiting the shops of

booksellers (as they ought to do, no doubt) or reading at home. The best time for bookselling, is when there is no kind of news stirring; then many of those who for months would have done nothing but talk of war or peace, revolutions, and counter-revolutions, &c. &c., for want of other amusement will have recourse to books; so that I have often experienced that the report of a war, or the trial of a great man, or indeed any subject that attracts the public attention, has been some hundreds of pounds out of my pocket in a few weeks.

Before I conclude this letter, I cannot help observing that the sale of books in general has increased prodigiously within the last twenty years. According to the best estimation I have been able to make, I suppose that more than four times the number of books are sold now than were sold twenty years since. The poorer sort of farmers, and even the poor country people in general, who before that period spent their winter evenings in relating stories of witches, ghosts, hobgoblins, &c., now shorten the winter nights by hearing their sons and daughters read tales, romances, &c.; and on entering their houses, you may see Tom Jones, Roderick Random, and other entertaining books, stuck up on their bacon racks, &c. If John goes to town with a load of hay, he is charged to be sure not to forget to bring home 'Peregrine Pickle's Adventures;' and when Dolly is sent to market to sell her eggs, she is commissioned to purchase, 'The History of Pamela Andrews.' In short, all ranks and degrees now read. But the most rapid increase of the sale of books has been since the termination of the late war.

A number of book-clubs are also formed in every part of England, where each member subscribes a certain sum quarterly to purchase books; in some of these clubs the books, after they have been read by all the subscribers, are sold among them to the highest bidders, and the money produced by such sale, is ex-

pended in fresh purchases, by which prudent and judicious mode each member has it in his power to become possessed of the work of any particular author he may judge deserving a superior degree of attention; and the members at large enjoy the advantage of a continual succession of different publications, instead of being restricted to a repeated perusal of the same authors; which must have been the case with many, if so rational a plan had not been adopted.

I have been informed, that when circulating libraries were first opened, the booksellers were much alarmed, and their rapid increase added to their fears, and led them to think that the sale of books would be much diminished by such libraries. But experience has proved that the sale of books, so far from being diminished by them, has been greatly promoted, as from those repositories many thousand families have been cheaply supplied with books, by which the taste for reading has become much more general, and thousands of books are purchased every year by such as have first borrowed them at those libraries, and after reading, approving of them, become purchasers.

Circulating libraries have also greatly contributed towards the amusement and cultivation of the other sex; by far the greatest part of ladies have now a taste for books.

"——Learning, once the man's exclusive pride,
Seems verging fast towards the female side."

It is true that I do not, with Miss Mary Wolstonecraft, "earnestly wish to see the distinction of sex confounded in society," not even with her exception, "unless where love animates the behaviour." And yet I differ widely from those gentlemen who would prevent the ladies from acquiring a taste for books; and as yet I have never seen any solid reason advanced why ladies should not polish their understandings, and render themselves fit companions for men of sense. And I have often thought that one great

reason why some gentlemen spend all their leisure hours abroad, is, for want of rational companions at home; for, if a gentleman happens to marry a fine lady, as justly painted by Miss Wolstonecraft, or the square elbow family drudge, as drawn to the life by the same hand, I must confess that I see no great inducement that he has to desire the company of his wife, as she scarce can be called a rational companion, or one fit to be entrusted with the education of her children; and even Rousseau is obliged to acknowledge, that it "is a melancholy thing for a father of a family, who is fond of home, to be obliged to be always wrapped up in himself, and to have nobody about him to whom he can impart his sentiments." Lord Lyttleton advises well in the two following lines:

"Do you, my fair, endeavour to possess
An elegance of mind, as well as dress."

I cannot help thinking that the reason why some of the eastern nations treat the ladies with such contempt, and look upon them in such a degrading point of view, is owing to their marrying them when mere children, both as to age and understanding, which last being entirely neglected, they seldom are capable of rational conversation, and of course are neglected and despised. But this is not the case with English ladies; they now in general read, not only novels, although many of that class are excellent productions, and tend to polish both the heart and head; but they also read the best books in the English language, and many read the best works in various languages; and there are some thousands of ladies who come to my shop, that know as well what books to chuse, and are as well acquainted with works of taste and genius as any gentlemen in the kingdom, notwithstanding the sneer against novel-readers, &c.

"The rights of women, says a female pen,
Are to do everything as well as men.

And since the sex at length has been inclin'd
To cultivate that useful part, the mind;
Since they have learnt to read, to write, to spell;
Since some of them have writ, and use it well;
Let us not force them back with brow severe,
Within the pale of ignorance and fear,
Confin'd entirely to domestic arts,
Producing only children, pies and tarts."

NARES.

I am sorry that doctor Gregory had some reason for giving the following advice to his daughters:—"If you happen (says he) to have any learning, keep it a profound secret, especially from the men, who generally look with a jealous and malignant eye on a woman of great parts." My God, what sort of men must these be, and what degrading ideas must they have of women! Butler, when he wrote this couplet, seems to have been one of that sort.

"The souls of women are so small,
That some believe they've none at all."

REMAINS.

A gentleman of my acquaintance lately rode fifty miles for the pleasure of seeing and conversing with a learned woman but very little known; her name is Elizabeth Ogilvie Benger. When very young she wrote a poem, entitled 'The Female.' She understands Latin, Greek, Italian, Spanish, and other languages, is well versed in various branches of arts and sciences. She is a tidewaiter's daughter, in or near Portsmouth. It seems she learned to read and write by picking up bits of paper in the street, with which she would retire to her garret.

"Why boast, O arrogant, imperious man,
Perfections so exclusive? Are thy powers
Nearer approaching to the deity? Can'st thou solve
Questions which high infinity propounds,
Soar nobler flights, or dare immortal deeds,
Unknown to woman, if she greatly dare

To use the pow'rs assign'd her? Active strength,
The boas. of animals, is clearly thine:
By this upheld, thou think'st the lesson rare
That female virtues teach, poor the height
Which female wit obtains. The theme unfold.
Its ample maze, for Montague befriends
The puzzled thought, and blazing in the eye
Of bolden'd opposition strait presents
The soul's best energies, her keenest powers,
Clear, vigorous, and enlightened."

MRS YEARSLEY.

The Sunday-schools are spreading very fast in most parts of England, which will accelerate the diffusion of knowledge among the lower classes of the community, and in a very few years exceedingly increase the sale of books. Here permit me earnestly to call on every honest bookseller (I trust my call will not be in vain) as well as on every friend to the extension of knowledge, to unite (as *you* I am confident will) in a hearty Amen.

Let such as doubt whether the enlightening of the understandings of the lower orders of society, makes them happier, or be of any utility to a state, read the following lines (particularly the last twelve) by Dr Goldsmith, taken from his Traveller.

"These are the charms to barren states assign'd,
Their wants are few, their wishes all confin'd;
Yet let them only share the praises due;
If few their wants, their pleasures are but few,
Since every want that stimulates the breast
Becomes a source of pleasure when redrest.
Hence from such lands each pleasing science flies,
That first excites desire, and then supplies.
Unknown to them when sensual pleasures cloy,
To fill the languid pause with finer joy;
Unknown those powers that raise the soul to flame.
Catch every nerve, and vibrate through the frame;
Their level life is but a mould'ring fire,
Nor quench'd by want. nor fann'd by strong desire;

Unfit for raptures, or if raptures cheer,
On some high festival of once a-year,
In wild excess the vulgar breast takes fire,
Till buried in debauch, the bliss expire.

" But not their joys alone thus coarsely flow,
Their morals, like their pleasures, are but low:
For, as refinement stops, from sire to son,
Unalter'd, unimprov'd, their manners run;
And love's and friendship's finely pointed dart
Fall blunted from each indurated heart;
Some sterner virtues o'er the mountain's breast,
May sit like falcons low'ring on the nest,
But all the gentler morals, such as play
Thro' life's more cultivated walks, and charm our way
These far dispers'd, on tim'rous pinions fly,
To sport and flutter in the kinder sky."

It is worth remarking, that the introducing histories, romances, stories, poems, &c. into schools, has been a very great means of diffusing a general taste for reading among all ranks of people. While in schools the children only read the bible (which was the case in many schools a few years ago) children then did not make so early a progress in reading as they have since; they have been pleased and entertained as well as instructed, and this relish for books in many will last as long as life.

I am also informed that literature is making a still more rapid progress in Germany, and that there are at this time seven thousand living authors in that country, and that everybody reads.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XL.

"Happy the man that has each fortune tried
To whom she much has given, much denied,
With abstinence all delicates he sees,
And can regale himself with toast and cheese."

ART OF COOKERY

"One solid dish his week-day meals affords,
And added pudding consecrates the Lord's."

"Your business ne'er defer from day to day,
Sorrow and poverty attend delay;
But lo! the careful man shall always find
Encrease of wealth according to his mind."

COOKE'S Hesiod.

DEAR FRIEND,

THE public at large, and booksellers in particular, have beheld my increasing stock with the utmost astonishment, they being entirely at a loss to conceive by what means I have been enabled to make good all my payments; and for several years, in the beginning of my business, some of the trade repeatedly asserted that it was totally impossible that I could continue to pay for the large numbers of books that I continually purchased; and ten years since, being induced to take a journey into my own county with a view to the restoration of my health, which had been materially injured by intense application to catalogue-making, too much reading, &c., during the six weeks that I retired into the west, Mrs Lackington was perpetually interrogated respecting the time that I was expected to return. This was done in such a manner as evidently showed that many thought I never intended to return at all. But how great was their

surprise, when as a prelude to my return, I sent home several waggon loads of books which I had purchased in the country.

As I never had any part of the miser in my composition, I always proportioned my expenses according to my profits; that is, I have for many years expended two-thirds of the profits of my trade; which proportion of expenditure I never exceeded.

"Things to the owners minds their merit square;
Good, if well used; if ill, they evils are."

If you will please to refer to Dr Johnson's 'Idler' for "the Progress of Ned Drugget," you will see much of the progress of your humble servant depicted. Like Ned, in the beginning I opened and shut my own shop, and welcomed a friend by a shake of the hand. About a year after, I beckoned across the way for a pot of good porter. A few years after that, I sometimes invited my friends to dinner, and provided them a roasted fillet of veal; in a progressive course, the ham was introduced, and a pudding was the next addition made to the feast. For some time a glass of brandy and water was a luxury; a glass of Mr Beaufoy's raisin wine succeeded; and as soon as two-thirds of my profits enabled me to afford good red port, it immediately appeared; nor was sherry long behind.

"Wine whets the wit, improves its native force,
And gives a pleasing flavour to discourse,
By making all our spirits debonnair,
Throws off the fears, the sediments of care.'

"As April when painting the furrows,
Drives winter away to the pole;
Old port, by dispelling life's sorrows,
Relaxes the frost of the soul."

It was some years before I discovered that a lodging

in the country was very healthy. Gay's lines were then repeated:

"Long in the noisy town I've been immur'd,
Respir'd in smoke, and all its cares endur'd."

The year after, my country lodging by regular gradation was transformed into a country house, and in another year the inconveniences attending a stage coach were remedied by a chariot.

"My precious rib has ventured to declare,
'Tis vulgar on one's legs to take the air."
COMFORTS OF MARRIAGE.

For four years, Upper Holloway was to me an elysium; then Surrey appeared unquestionably the most beautiful county in England, and Upper Merton the most rural village in Surrey. So now Merton is selected as the seat of occasional philosophical retirement.

"Here on a single plank thrown safe ashore,
I hear the tumult of the distant throng,
As that of seas remote or dying storms.
Here like a shepherd gazing from his hut,
Touching his reed or leaning on his staff,
Eager ambition's fiery chace I see;
I see the circling hunt of noisy men
Burst law's inclosure, leap the mounds of right,
Pursuing and pursu'd, each others prey." YOUNG.

But I assure you, my dear friend, that in every step of my progress, envy and malevolence have pursued me close.

When, by the advice of that eminent physician, Dr Lettsom, I purchased a horse, and saved my life by the exercise it afforded me, the old adage, "set a beggar on horseback and he'll ride to the devil," was deemed fully verified; but when Mrs Lackington mounted another, "they were very sorry to see people so young in business run on at so great a rate." The

occasional relaxation which we enjoyed in the country was censured as an abominable piece of pride; but when the carriage and servants in livery appeared, "they would not be the first to hurt a foolish tradesman's character; but if (as was but too probable) the docket was not already struck, the Gazette would soon settle that point."

"Base envy withers at another's joy,
And hates that excellence it cannot reach." THOMSON.

"It is no less a proof (says Dr Johnson) of eminence to have many enemies, than many friends."

But I have been lately informed that these good-natured and compassionate people have for some time found it necessary to alter their story.

"No more shall want thy weary hand restrain,
Henceforth good days and plenty shall betide:
The gods will for the good old age provide;
A glorious change attends thy low estate;
Sudden and mighty riches round thee wait;
Be wise, and use the lucky hour of fate."

ROWE's Lucan.

It seems that at last they have discovered the secret springs from whence I drew my wealth; however, they do not quite agree in their accounts, for although some can tell you the very number of my fortunate lottery-ticket, others are as positive that I found bank-notes in an old book, to the amount of many thousand pounds, and, if they please, can even tell you the title of the very fortunate old book that contained this treasure. But you shall receive it from me, which you will deem authority to the full as unexceptionable. I assure you then, upon my honour, that I found the whole of what I am possessed of, in—*small profits*, bound by *industry*, and clasped by *economy*.

"Gilt toils for gain at honour's vast expense,
Heaven throws the trifle into innocence,
And fixes happiness in hell's despite,
The necessary consequence of right."

EARL NUGENT TC LORD CORNBURY

Read this, ye covetous wretches in all trades, who when you get a good customer are for making the most of him! But if you have neither honour nor honesty, you should at least possess a little common sense. Reflect on the many customers that your overcharges have already driven from your shops! Do you think that you can find customers enough so deficient in penetration as not to discover your characters? No such thing. Your exorbitant charges are a general subject of conversation and dislike: you cannot with confidence look your own customers in the face, as you are conscious of your meanness and imposition, and your sordid disposition is evidently the reason that some gentlemen are led to look with contempt and disdain on tradesmen. But when men in trade are men of honour, they will in general be treated as such; and were it otherwise,

> "One self-approving hour whole years outweighs
> Of stupid starers and of loud huzzas;
> And more true joy Marcellus exil'd feels,
> Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels." POPE.

"Self esteem is one of the first ingredients of man's happiness," and I pity from my soul many poor wretches whom I observe bartering away their constitutions and what few liberal sentiments they may possess, rising early and sitting up late, exerting all the powers of the body and mind, to get what they call a competency; no matter by what means this is effected.

> "Silver to gold we own should yield the prize;
> And gold to virtue: louder folly cries,
> Ye sons of care let money first be sought;
> Virtue is only worth a second thought.
> My friends, get money, get a large estate,
> By honest means; but get at any rate.
> This maxim echoes still from street to street,
> While young and old the pleasing strains repeat."
>
> FRANCIS's Horace.

Thousands actually destroy themselves in accomplishing their grand design; others live to obtain the long-wished for country retreat. But, alas! the promised happiness is as far from them as ever, often farther. The busy bustling scene of business being over, a vacuity in the mind takes place, spleen and vapours suceeed, which increase bodily infirmities, death stares them in the face. The mean dirty ways by which much of their wealth has been obtained make retrospect reflections intolerable. Philosophy stands aloof, nor ever deigns to visit the sordid soul. Gardens and pleasure grounds become dreary desarts; the miserable possessors linger out a wretched existence, or put a period to it with a halter or a pistol.

"Sated, loathing, hopeless here of bliss,
Some plunge to seek it into death's abyss."

LORD NUGENT.

"Were this not common would it not be strange?
That 'tis so common, this is stranger still."

I cannot omit to quote the following fine lines from Mr Soame Jenyns, as they naturally occur to my recollection.

"Useless in business, yet unfit for ease,
Nor skill'd to mend mankind, nor form'd to please.
The mind, not taught to think, no useful store,
To fix reflection, dreads the vacant hour;
Turn'd in itself, its numerous faults are seen,
And all the mighty void that lies within.
'Tis conscious virtue crowns the blest retreat."

"Solitude (says Cowley) can be well fitted and set aright but upon very few persons: they who have knowledge enough of the world to see the follies of it, and virtue enough to despise all vanity."

The profits of my business the present year, 1791, will amount to four thousand pounds.* What it will

* Since this was wrote my business is enlarged; in 1792, my profits were about 5,000*l*.

increase to I know not; but if my health will permit me to carry it on a few years longer, there is very great probability, considering the rapid increase which each succeeding year has produced, that the profits will be double what they now are; for I here pledge my reputation as a tradesman never to deviate from my old plan of giving as much for libraries as it is possible for a tradesman to give, and selling them, and new publications also, for the same small profits that have been attended with such astonishing success for some years past. And I hope that my assistants will also persevere in that attentive, obliging mode of conduct which has so long distinguished No. 46 and 47, Chiswell street, Moorfields; conscious, that should I ever be weak enough to adopt an opposite line of conduct, or permit those who act under my direction so to do, I should no longer meet with the very extraordinary encouragement and support which I have hitherto experienced; neither should I have the smallest claim to a continuance of it under such circumstances.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XLI.

"But by your revenue measure your expense,
And to your funds and acres join your sense."

YOUNG's Love of Fame.

"Learn what thou ow'st thy country and thy friend,
What's requisite to spare, and what to spend."

DRYDEN's Persius.

DEAR FRIEND,

THE open manner of stating my profits will no doubt appear strange to many who are not acquainted

with my singular conduct in that and other respects. But you, sir, know that I have for fourteen years past kept a strict account of my profits. Every book in my possession, before it is offered to sale, is marked with a private mark of what it cost me, and with a public mark of what it is to be sold for; and every article, whether the price is sixpence or sixty pounds, is entered in a day-book as it is sold, with the price it cost and the money it sold for: and each night the profits of the day are cast up by one of my shopmen, as every one of them understand my private marks. Every Saturday night the profits of the week are added together and mentioned before all my shopmen, &c., the week's profits, and also the expenses of the week are then entered one opposite the other, in a book kept for the purpose; the whole sum taken in the week is also set down, and the sum that has been paid for books bought. These accounts are kept publicly in my shop, and ever have been so, as I never saw any reason for concealing them, nor was ever jealous of any of my men's profiting by my example and taking away any of my business, as I always found that such of them as did set up for themselves came to my shop, and purchased to the amount of ten times more than they hindered me from selling. By keeping an account of my profits, and also of my expenses, I have always known how to regulate the latter by the former. "To live above our station shews a proud heart; and to live under it, discovers a narrow soul." Horace says,

> "A part I will enjoy as well as keep,
> My heir may sigh and think it want of grace;
> But sure no statute in his favour says,
> How free or frugal I shall pass my days.
> I get and sometimes spend, at others spare,
> Divided between carelessness and care."

And I have done that without the trifling way of setting down a halfpenny-worth of matches, or a penny for a turnpike. I have one person in the shop

whose constant employment it is to receive all the cash, and discharge all bills that are brought for payment; and if Mrs Lackington wants money for housekeeping, &c., or if I want money for hobby-horses, &c., we take five or ten guineas, pocket it, and set down the sum taken out of trade as expended; when that is gone, we repeat our application, but never take the trouble of setting down the *items*. But such of my servants as are entrusted to lay out money are always obliged to give in their accounts, to shew how each sum has been expended.

> " Bless'd who with order their affairs dispose,
> But rude confusion is the source of woes."
>
> COOKE's Hesiod.

It may not be improper here to take a little notice of some very late insinuations of my old envious friends. It has been suggested that I am now grown immensely rich, and that having already more property than I can reasonably expect to live to expend, and no young family to provide for, I for these reasons ought to decline my business, and no longer engross trade to myself that ought to be divided into a number of channels, and thus support many families. In answer to which I will observe, that some of these objectors were in trade before me, and when I first embarked in the profession of a bookseller, despised me for my mean beginning. When afterwards I adopted my plan of selling cheap, and for ready-money only, they made themselves very merry at my expense for expecting to succeed by so ridiculous a project, (as they in their consummate wisdom were pleased to term it,) and predestined my ruin, so that no doubt I ought to comply with anything they desire, however unreasonable it may appear to me.

To deny that I have a competence would be unpardonable ingratitude to the public, to go no higher:

> " 'Tis one thing madly to despise my store
> Another not to heed to treasure more;

Glad like a boy to snatch the first good day,
And pleas'd if sordid want be far away.
What is't to me (a passenger, God wot)
Whether the vessel be first rate or not.
The ship itself may make a better figure,
But I that sail, neither less nor bigger;
I neither strut with ev'ry fav'ring breath,
Nor strive with all the tempest in my teeth;
In power, wit, figure, virtue, fortune, plac'd,
Behind the foremost, and before the last.
Divided between carelessness and care,
Sometimes I spend, at other times I spare."

FORTESCUE.

But to insinuate that I am getting money for no good purpose, is false and invidious.* The great apostle St Paul, who was an humble follower of Christ, thought he might be permitted to boast of himself a little.

"If a man," says Selden, "does not take notice of that excellency and perfection that is in himself, how can he be thankful to God who is the author of it. Nay, if a man hath too mean an opinion of himself, it will render him unserviceable both to God and man." He adds, "pride may be allowed to this or that degree, else a man cannot keep up to his dignity." Montaigne says, "that to speak more of one's self than is really true, is not only presumption but folly; and for a man to speak less of himself than he really is, is folly, not modesty; and to take that for current pay, which is under a man's value, is cowardice and

* When I wrote my Life in 1791, I had no partner. In the summer of 1793, I sold Mr Robert Allen one-fourth share of the profits of my trade. This young gentleman was brought up in my shop, and of course is well acquainted with my method of doing business; and having been a witness to the profitable effects resulting from small profits, is as much in love with that mode of transacting business as I am; and as the trade is continually increasing, I suppose I shall be obliged to take another quarter partner very soon, as I cannot bear to see even trifles neglected.

pusillanimity." Aristotle says, "no virtue assists itself with falsehood, and that truth is never subject matter of error." "False modesty," says Bruyere, "is the most cunning sort of vanity; by this a man never appears what he is." After which, I suppose it will not be thought very presumptuous in me, if I should state a few facts, merely to justify my conduct in carrying on my trade beyond the time that certain persons would prescribe to me.

It is now about five years since I began to entertain serious thoughts of going out of business, on account of the bad state of health which both Mrs Lackington and myself have laboured under; and having no desire to be rich, we adopted Swift's prayer.

"Preserve, almighty Providence!
Just what you gave me—competence,
Remov'd from all th' ambitious scene,
Nor puff'd by pride, nor sunk by spleen."

But it was then suggested by several of my friends, that as I had about fifty poor relations, a great number of whom are children, others are old and nearly helpless, and that many had justly formed some expectations from me: therefore to give up such a trade as I was in possession of, before I was absolutely obliged to do it, would be a kind of injustice to those whom, by the ties of blood, I was in some measure bound to relieve and protect.

"Twice five-and-twenty cousins have implor'd
That help his purse, they cry, can well afford."
COMFORTS OF MARRIAGE.

These and other considerations induced me to waive the thoughts of precipitating myself out of so extensive and lucrative a business; and in the meantime I apply a part of the profits of it to maintain my good old mother, who is alive at Wellington in Somersetshire, her native place. I have two aged men and one woman whom I support: and I have also four children to maintain and educate, three of these chil-

dren have lost their father, and also their mother (who was my sister); the other child has both her parents living, but they are poor; many others of my relations are in the same circumstances, and stand in need of my assistance, so that —

If e'er I've mourn'd my humble, lowly state,
If e'er I've bow'd my knee at fortune's shrine,
If e'er a wish escap'd me to be great,
The fervent prayer, humanity, was thine.
Perish the man who hears the piteous tale
Unmov'd, to whom the heart-felt glow's unknown;
On whom the widow's plaints could ne'er prevail,
Nor made the injur'd wretch's cause his own.
How little knows he the extatic joy,
The thrilling bliss of cheering wan despair!
How little knows the pleasing warm employ,
That calls the grateful tribute of a tear.
The splendid dome, the vaulted rock to rear,
The glare of pride and pomp be, grandeur, thine!
To wipe from misery's eye the wailing tear,
And soothe the oppressed orphan's woe, be mine."

It has also been frequently said, that by selling my books very cheap, I have materially injured other booksellers both in town and country. But I still deny the charge: and here I will first observe, that I have as just a reason to complain of them for giving credit, as they can have for my selling cheap and giving no credit; as it is well known that there are many thousands of people everywhere to be found who will decline purchasing at a shop where credit is denied, when they can find shopkeepers enough who will readily give it; and as I frequently lose customers who having always been accustomed to have credit, they will not take the trouble to pay for every article as sent home; these of course deal at those shops who follow the old mode of business; so that in such cases I might say to the proprietors of these shops, "You ought not to give any person credit, because by so doing you are taking customers from me." As

to my hurting the trade by selling cheap, they are, upon the whole, mistaken; for although no doubt some instances will occur, in which they may observe that the preference is given to my shop, and the books purchased of me on account of their being cheap; yet they never consider how many books they dispose of on the very same account. As, however, this may appear rather paradoxical, I will explain my meaning farther.

I now sell more than one hundred thousand volumes annually; many who purchase part of these, do so solely on account of their cheapness; many thousands of these books would have been destroyed, as I have before remarked, but for my selling them on those very moderate terms; now when thousands of these articles are sold, they become known by being handed about in various circles of acquaintances, many of whom wishing to be possessed of the same books, without enquiring the price of their friends, step into the first bookseller's shop, and give their orders for articles which they never would have heard of, had not I, by selling them cheap, been the original cause of their being dispersed abroad; so that by means of the plan pursued in my shop, whole editions of books are sold off, and new editions printed of the works of authors, who but for that circumstance would have been scarce noticed at all.

But (say they) you not only sell such books cheap as are but little known, but you even sell a great deal under price the very first-rate articles, however well they may be known, or however highly they may be thought of by the literary world. I acknowledge the charge, and again repeat that, as I do not give any credit, I really ought to do so; and I may add, that in some measure I am obliged to do it; for who would come out of their way to Chiswell street, to pay me the same price in ready money as they might purchase for at the first shop they came to. and have credit also.

And although first-rate authors are very well known, yet I well know that by selling them cheaper than others many are purchased of me that never would have been purchased at the full price, and every book that is sold tends to spread the fame of the author, and rapidly extends the sale, and as I before remarked, sends more customers to other shops as well as to my own.

I must also inform you, that besides five or six private catalogues of books in sheets, for booksellers only, I publish two catalogues for the public every year, and of each of those public catalogues I print above three thousand copies, most of those copies are lent about from one to another, so that supposing only four persons see each copy, twenty-four thousand persons look over my catalogues annually; no other mode of advertising bears the least proportion to it.

I could say much more on this subject, but will not unnecessarily take up your time, as I trust what is here advanced will convey full conviction to your mind, and as I believe it is universally known and allowed, that no man ever promoted the sale of books in an equal degree with your old friend, and as in reading I have experienced many thousand happy hours, and which still engrosses the largest portion of my time, and gives me more real pleasure and solid satisfaction than all other things in the world; you cannot conceive what agreeable sensations I enjoy, on reflecting on my having contributed so much towards the pleasures of others, in diffusing through the world such an immense number of books, by which many have been enlightened and taught to think, and from mere animals have become rational beings. With a book, the poor man in his intervals from labour forgets his hard lot, or learns to bear it with pleasure, whilst in intellectual pleasures he can vie with kings. Books afford comfort to the afflicted, and consolation to the prisoner; books are our most constant and

most faithful companions and friends, of which we never are cloyed.

" What heartfelt bliss! what pleasure-winged hours!
Transported are we to Rome's letter'd sons;
We by their favour Tyber's banks enjoy,
The temples trace, and share their noble games;
Enter the crowded theatre at will;
March to the forum, hear the consul plead,
Are present in the thundering Capitol
When Tully speaks; at softer hours attend
Harmonious Virgil to his Mantuan farm,
Or Baia's shore: how often drink his strains,
Rural, or epic sweet! How often rove
With Horace, bard and moralist benign,
With happy Horace rove, in fragrant paths
Of myrtle bowers, by Tivoli's cascade.
Hail, precious pages! that amuse and teach,
Exalt the genius, and improve the breast;
But chiefly thou, supreme philosophy,
Shed thy best influence; with thy train appear
Of graces mild——————————
Tutor of human life! Auspicious guide,
Whose faithful clue unravels ev'ry maze,
Whose skill can disengage the tangled thorn,
And smooth the rock to down! whose magic powers
Control each storm, and bid the roar be still."

DR S. DAVIES.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XLII.

"This is a traveller, sir; knows men and manners; and has ploughed up sea so far, till both the poles have knocked; has seen the sun take coach, and can distinguish the colour of his horses, and their kinds, and had a Flanders mare leaped there."

BEAUMONT and FLETCHER's Scornful Lady.

DEAR FRIEND,

AMONGST the variety of occurrences with which I have endeavoured to entertain you, perhaps not all equally interesting, (and the most material of them, I am duly sensible, not entitling me to the claim of being esteemed a writer possessed of the very first abilities this age or nation has produced,) I recollect my not yet having given you an account of my principal travels. Possibly you might very readily pardon that omission, as from what has already appeared, it must be evident the engagements which from time to time have fully engrossed my attention, have not furnished me with an oppportunity of making the tour of Europe, or tracing the source of the river Nile, much less circumnavigating the globe. And even supposing I had been possessed both of the time and inclination for such extensive undertakings, the disadvantages which I labour under for want of having received a proper education would have disqualified me from making such remarks and observations as naturally present themselves to those who have been fortunate enough to possess that advantage, and of course are qualified to present the world with a variety of subjects equally curious and instructive: though it is not without reluctance, I think it necessary here to observe, that some of these gentlemen, not content with giving a true account of what

actually occurred to them, and supposing that plain matter of fact would not be sufficiently interesting to excite that superior degree of attention and admiration which they were ambitious as authors to acquire, they have thought proper to intermix so much of the marvellous into their narrations, as has been the occasion of many persons reading them with such diffidence as to doubt the truth of many relations, which though really strictly consistent with veracity, yet being novel and uncommon, they were unwilling to credit, lest they should incur the censure of being possessed of a superior degree of weakness and credulity. This I am also confident has induced many a modest author to omit passages, which, though really true, he was cautious of publishing, from a fear of being subjected to the same severe animadversions, or what is still worse, being suspected of wilfully imposing on his readers. Recent instances of which, were it necessary, I could adduce; but I shall proceed with cautioning you from being alarmed lest I should fall into either of these errors; nothing very marvellous will occur in what I mean to present you with, though I shall not be intimidated from relating real facts, from the apprehension of not being credited. As an additional recommendation, (no doubt,) the history of my travels will be interspersed with such remarks on men and manners as have presented themselves to me during my peregrinations; and this I previously warn you will be done in my "accustomed desultory manner," from which, as Mr Pennant says in his History of London, "I am too old to depart," that is, as Dr Johnson might possibly have explained it; "Sir, you are then too old to mend." But you, my dear friend, are not so fastidious a critic: although you may find the whole very dull, it shall not be very long; so that if it does not act as a cordial to enliven your spirits, it may (if read in the evening) prove a powerful narcotic, and afford you some pleasing dreams, when

"Tir'd nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep,
His ready visit pays."

I shall therefore not trouble you with a detail of bad roads, the impositions of innkeepers, what food I partook of, how many bottles of wine were drank, the height of steeples, &c.; a sufficiency of this, I trust, has already appeared in different writers. Thus much by way of preparation for my journies. I now set out.

In September 1787, I set off for Edinburgh; and in all the principal towns through which I passed, was led from a motive of curiosity, as well as with a view towards obtaining some valuable purchases, to examine the booksellers' shops for scarce and valuable books; but although I went by the way of York, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, &c., and returned through Glasgow, Carlisle, Leeds, Lancaster, Preston, Manchester, and other considerable places, I was much surprised, as well as disappointed, at meeting with very few of the works of the most esteemed authors; and those few consisted in general of ordinary editions, besides an assemblage of common trifling books, bound in sheep, and that too in a very bad manner. It is true, at York and Leeds there were a few (and but very few) good books; but in all the other towns between London and Edinburgh nothing but trash was to be found; in the latter city indeed a few capital articles are kept, but in no other part of Scotland.

In 1790 I repeated my journey, and was much mortified to be under a necessity of confirming my former observations. This remarkable deficiency in the article of books is however not peculiar to the northern parts of England; as I have repeatedly travelled into the western parts, and found abundant cause for dissatisfaction on the same account, so that I may venture without fear of contradiction to assert, that London, as in all other articles of commerce, is likewise the grand emporium of Great Britain for books, engrossing nearly the whole of what is valu-

able in that very extensive, beneficial, and I may add lucrative, branch of trade. As to Ireland I shall only observe, that if the booksellers in that part of the empire do not shine in the possession of valuable books, they must certainly be allowed to possess superior industry in reprinting the works of every English author of merit as soon as published, and very liberally endeavouring to disseminate them, in a surreptitious manner, through every part of our island, though the attempt now generally proves abortive, to the great loss and injury of the ingenious projectors.

At Newcastle, I passed a day or two in the year 1787, where I was much delighted with viewing a singular phenomenon in natural history, namely, the celebrated crow's nest affixed above the weathercock, on the upper extremity of the exchange, in the market-place. In the year 1783, as I was well informed, the crows first built this curious nest, and succeeded in hatching and rearing their young. In the following year they attempted to rebuild it: but a contest ensuing among some of the sable fraternity, after a fierce engagement they were obliged to relinquish it, and the nest was demolished by the victorious party before it was finished. This bad success however did not deter the original builders and possessors from returning in the year 1785, when they took quiet possession of their freehold, rebuilt the premises, and reared another family. This they repeated the three following years with equal success, and when I was there in the year 1790 much of the nest remained, but the crows had forsaken it. The above occurrence, though to many it may appear incredible, is an undoubted fact. That crows should come into the centre of a populous town to build their nests is of itself remarkable, but much more so that they should prefer a weathercock to any other situation, where the whole family and their habitation turned round with every puff of wind, though they

were perfectly secured from falling by the spike of iron which rose above the fane, around which the whole made their revolutions; and as on one side the nest was higher than on the other, that part being always to windward, by this ingenious contrivance of the feathered architects the inside of the nest was continually kept in a proper degree of warmth. I never recollect these various circumstances without being lost in admiration at the extraordinary sagacity of these birds. While I am on birds, I will relate another odd circumstance that happened not far from Moorfields: in the summer of 1781, in a burial-ground near Peerless Pool, there was one corner where human bones were piled up, and in one of the skulls a blackbird made her nest, and hatched five young ones; three or four of which being cocks, were kept by the neighbours, and turned out fine singers.

In Newcastle however I met with a greater curiosity, as well as a more amiable subject of it, than a crow's nest, to excite my astonishment.

In my first journey, Mr Fisher the bookseller introduced me to his daughter, a charming young lady, who being unfortunately born deaf, was consequently dumb, till a gentleman a few years since taught her to understand what was said to her by the motion of the lips. I had the pleasure of conversing with her several times, and found that she had much of the Scotch accent, which, as Mr Fisher informed me, she acquired of the gentleman who taught her not only to understand the conversation of others but to speak, he being a native of that country; he remarked also, that she never had spoken the Newcastle dialect. This young lady, I was also informed, dances exceedingly well, keeping exact time with the music, whether it is played slow or quick. When it is considered what an intense application must have been used, both on the part of the teacher and his fair pupil, to produce such a happy effect, it surely reflects great credit on each of the parties.

In the year 1790, when I again visited Newcastle with Mrs Lackington, this young lady became the first object of inquiry, and we were both introduced to her.

I have lately been informed of a lady now in London, who, although she is deaf, takes great delight in music, and when asked how she is affected by it, she answers that she feels it at her breast and at the bottom of her feet.

Being on the subject of curiosities, and having just related the pleasure I experienced on account of a lady acquiring the use of speech, permit me now to present you with another rarity indeed!—somewhat connected with the former, no doubt, but intended as an effectual remedy (temporary at least) for an opposite complaint of the same organs, viz. too great a volubility of speech, with which (as it is said) many females are so infected, as sometimes to lead them to exceed the bounds of due moderation and female decorum, and even display itself in the utterance of such harsh (though frequently inarticulate) terms as tend too much to disgrace the unhappy patient, and violently affect the auditory nerves of all persons within a considerable distance.—To quit metaphor.

At the town hall I was shewn a piece of antiquity, called a *brank*. It consists of a combination of iron fillets, and is fastened to the head by a lock fixed to the back part of it; a thin plate of iron goes into the mouth, sufficiently strong however to confine the tongue, and thus prevent the wearer from making any use of that restless member. The use of this piece of machinery is to punish notorious scolds. I am pleased to find that it is now considered merely as a matter of curiosity, the females of that town happily having not the smallest occasion for the application of so harsh an instrument: whether it is that all females apprehensive of being included in that description, have travelled southward, to avoid the danger of so degrading an exhibition, or whatever other reason is

assigned, I forgot to enquire. It however affords me pleasure to reflect, that the ladies of Newcastle are left at liberty to adopt a head-dress of their own choosing, confident that they possess a more refined taste than to fix upon one by no means calculated to display their lovely countenances to advantage; as I am persuaded the brank would cast such a gloom on the fairest of them as would tend much to diminish the influence of their charms, and give pain to every beholder. It may be prudent, notwithstanding, still to preserve it in terrorem, as who knows what future times may produce? As I esteem it a very ingenious contrivance, and as there may be parts of the country still to be found where the application of such a machine may be useful in some Christian families (I will not say in all, having sufficient grounds for asserting the contrary) I here present you with an accurate sketch of it.

together with the manner of its application: that if any ingenious artist should be applied to, he may not

be at a loss how it is to be made. I would however advice such a one to be cautious in offering them tc public sale, and by no means to advertise them (especially if a married man, or having any views towards matrimony.)

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XLIII.

"Oh, land of cakes! how oft my eyes
Desire to see thy mountains rise!
How Fancy loves thy steeps to climb,
So wild, so solemn, so sublime."

"All the stage-coaches that travel so fast,
Must get now and then an unfortunate cast."

DEAR FRIEND,

IN my first journey to Scotland I sometimes travelled post, but often entered the different stage-coaches, &c. for a stage or two, when I happened to see any setting out so as to suit my time and inclination: but at last I had pretty nearly paid dear for it, as the driver of the diligence from Darlington to Durham happened to be much inebriated, and before his quitting Darlington had almost overset us: not observing the man was drunk, we attributed the fault to the horses; we were however very speedily undeceived in that respect by many concurrent circumstances, so that we were one minute nearly in the ditch on the right hand, and the next but just escaping that on the left; at other times we experienced striking proofs of the inability of our conductor against the number of one-horse coal carts, not to mention their frequently running foul of us for being

on the wrong side of the road; (for drivers of coaches and carts can be to the full as savage towards each other in the country as in London): however, notwithstanding all these "hair-breadth escapes," we retained our seats till we arrived within three quarters of a mile of Durham, when at length the specific gravity of the driver's head preponderating over all the other parts of his frame united, precipitated him with violence from the elevated station, he had, till then (though with difficulty) possessed, to his parent earth. There were three unfortunate passengers in the carriage, left to the discretion of the horses, viz. a gentleman, an innkeeper's wife, and your humble servant; the lady in strict compliance with the practice of her sex in similar situations, on seeing the rapid descent of our charioteer, immediately honoured us with a loud and shrill shriek; the quadrupeds, not accustomed to this pretty female note so much as the sonorous voice of a coachman, mistook for a signal to mend their pace, and they, habituated to pay all due obedience to the commands of their superiors of the biped creation, when understood by them, and finding no check, instantly proceeded to a full gallop; and we, however reluctantly, followed them down a gentle descent, not at a gentle rate, but with prodigious velocity. As I was quite calm and collected, I coolly reconnoitred the road before us, and observing that it was perfectly clear, as for half a mile not a coal-cart was to be seen, although we had lately passed several score, I began to reason with my companions, and they speedily became calm enough to assist in holding a council what was best to be done in our critical situation. Our debates were quickly ended, as we were unanimous in opinion that, if we once entered the city of Durham, the carriage must inevitably be torn to pieces, owing to the variety of turnings and obstructions we should have to encounter, we therefore entered into an immediate resolution, *nem. con.* that to open the doors and exhibit our agility in

leaping out, was, of "two evils, choosing the least:" this we instantly did in as careful a manner as possible; we first alighted on our feet, and next complimented the ground with our noses, without receiving much injury. Our female companion indeed, by being rather too precipitate, alighted in a manner which on any other occasion would not have appeared strictly decent, of which she, poor lady! was so sensible, that she immediately "hoped *as how* we were both *married* gentlemen;" which was quickly replied to by both in the affirmative; and thus we saved our fair one the trouble of exerting herself in another scream, and ourselves the punishment of hearing it.

Being no longer parties concerned in the danger, it afforded us some entertainment to observe the progress of our vehicle now considerably lightened by our escape from it, and becoming every moment still lighter by the exclusion of small trunks, boxes, parcels, great coats, &c.; they, in imitation of our example, making leaps, some from the inside of the carriage, and others from the boot; whether occasioned by the repulsion of the carriage and its appendages, or the attraction of the earth, I am not sufficiently versed in philosophy to decide. Posterity, when they peruse my labours, no doubt will determine this weighty point, and transmit it to the remotest period of time, properly dignified by F.R.S. in Phil. Trans.

The horses finding themselves less incumbered, and urged on by the noise of the doors continually flapping, increased their speed: happily however the carriage was stopped before it entered the city, and no damage was sustained either by the horses or the carriage. Before we left the inn, our careful son of the whip arrived, not in the least injured, but rather benefited by his disaster, suddenly transformed into a state of perfect sobriety; after him followed two countrymen laden with the several articles which had been so violently ejected. As I reflected that this unguarded man might not always be equally successful, either to

himself or his passengers, as in the present instance, I obtained a promise from the innkeeper never to permit him to drive any carriage in future, in the management of which he had any concern. But I have since learned that the innkeeper did not keep his word, as he soon permitted him to drive the same diligence; and a few months after, being drunk as usual, he fell from the box, and was killed on the spot.

It is astonishing what a number of fatal accidents continually happen from carelessness and the want of sobriety in this thoughtless race of beings. I was informed that, only two days previous to my arrival at Durham, a coachman quitting his box to step into an adjacent house, in his absence the horses began to move gently, and a lady in the carriage giving a loud scream, the noise occasioned the horses to set off at full gallop, in consequence of which a lady of Durham, happening unfortunately at that instant to be crossing the way, was thrown down, and the wheels passing over her, she died on the spot—one of the many melancholy effects resulting from the ridiculous practice of screaming. But I crave pardon of the ladies: when I begin passing censure on them, it is high time to close my epistle (which if not very long will perhaps be deemed sufficiently impertinent) with,

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XLIV.

"O that the too censorious world would learn
This wholesome rule, and with each other bear.
But man, as if a foe to his own species,
Takes pleasure to report his neighbour's faults,
Judging with rigour ev'ry small offence,
And prides himself in scandal."

HAYWOOD'S D. of Brunswick.

"A nation fam'd for song, and beauty's charms;
Zealous yet modest, innocent though free:
Patient of toil; sincere amidst alarms;
Inflexible in faith: invincible in arms."

BEATTIE'S Minstrel.

DEAR FRIEND,

IT is reported of a very eminent author that he never blotted a line of what he had once written; on which it has been remarked, that it was a pity he had not blotted a thousand. Now, though my extreme modesty will not permit me to put myself on a level with that great man as an author, whatever the impartial world may think of our comparative merits, I must confess I do not like to blot what I have once written, fearful lest when I begin (another proof of my modesty) I should deface the major part of my manuscripts, and thus deprive the public of the great advantages which may result from them. What I allude to, is an unfortunate slip of the pen in my last: however, as "confession of a fault makes some amends," and I immediately checked myself, craved pardon, abruptly closed my letter, and threw the offending pen from me with some degree of anger, I hope those lovely fair ones, who might think I meant to affront them, will with their accustomed benignity

forgive, and indulge me with a smile on my future labours; and as a convincing proof how sensible I am of their kind condescension, I here engage never more to express my dislike of their screaming, except they should omit purchasing books of me, which I am sure every candid fair (and what fair one is not candid?) will think sufficiently provoking.

But, in order to remind them that every great man does not always conduct himself with equal politeness towards the ladies, I beg permission to introduce a very great man to them; no less a personage than doctor Johnson: of whom indeed so much hath already been sung and said, that the subject may be supposed to be nearly exhausted; which is, however so far from being the case, that notwithstanding two quarto volumes of his life by Mr Boswell are just published, we are taught to expect another life by a different hand. Indeed until some other great man makes his exit (myself out of the question), we are likely to be entertained with fresh anecdotes of him; but when that period once arrives, then farewell Johnson.

The doctor, whose extreme fondness for that agreeable beverage tea is well known, was once in company with a number of ladies assembled to partake with him of the same refreshment. The lady of the house happened to be one of those particularly attentive to punctilio, and had exhibited her finest set of china for the entertainment of her guests; the doctor who drank large quantities and with considerable expedition, could not always wait with becoming patience ceremoniously to ask for and receive in due form the addition of a lump of sugar when necessary; he therefore without permission put his finger and thumb into the sugar-dish, tumbling the contents over till he met with a piece of the proper size; the lady kept her eye fixed on him the whole time, and deeming his conduct a great breach of decorum, resolved to make him sensible of it, by immediately ordering the servant to

change the sugar-dish. The doctor, though apparently attentive to his tea, noticed it, and as soon as he had emptied the cup, put it together with the saucer under the fire-place, with due care, however, not to break them. This was too severe a trial for the poor lady, who, apprehensive for the fate of her dear china, after a decent scream, with warmth demanded the reason of his treating her in so rude a manner. "Why, my dear madam, (replied he) I was alarmed with the idea that whatever I touched was thereby contaminated, and impressed with anxious desire to contribute towards your felicity, I removed the object so defiled from your presence with all possible expedition." This reply, though it extorted a smile from all the company present, did not satisfy the lady to whom it was addressed, who, notwithstanding she exerted herself to appear in good humour, was too much offended to forget the affront. This anecdote has been related to me with some *addenda* which heighten the story, though more to the disadvantage of the doctor; but I believe as here related, it may be depended on as the real fact.

During my continuance in Scotland, which was about three weeks the first time, and about a month the last, I often reflected with pain on the illiberal not to say brutal treatment the inhabitants received from the doctor. At Edinburgh I heard various anecdotes related of him, which were perfectly novel to me, and in all probability will be so to you. I shall therefore give you a specimen.

Being one day at a gentleman's house in Edinburgh, several ladies and gentlemen came in to pay their respects to him, and among others the then lord provost went up to the doctor, bowing repeatedly, and expressing the highest respect for him, to all which the doctor paid not the least attention. Exceedingly hurt at so flagrant a mark of disrespect, he turned round, and put a shilling into the hand of the gentleman of the house: on being asked what the shilling

was intended for, he replied, "Have not I seen your bear?"

As the doctor was one day drinking tea at another gentleman's house, the lady asked him if he did not choose another cup; it seems she had forgot her having before asked him the same question, and on her repeating it he replied, "Woman, have I not already told you that I had done?" On which the lady answered him in his own gruff manner. During his continuance in her house she always talked to him without ceremony, and it was remarked that she had more influence with him than any other person in Scotland.

I was much pleased with the politeness of the gentleman who related me this story of the doctor, as he appeared anxious to excuse him for his want of due decorum, and thus to palliate a most obvious blemish in the character of one of the most eminent of my countrymen. I could wish the compilers of the biographical department of that truly great and useful work the 'Encyclopedia Britannica' would observe the same politeness and impartiality. And I hope that this hint will also induce them in some subsequent edition, when I am gone to

"That bourne from whence no traveller returns,"

to do justice to my great and astonishing merits, by way of compensation for having fallen short in speaking of other great men; and should I happen to be out of print by the time the editors of the Biographia Britannica arrive at letter L, which seems extremely probable, according to the very deliberate progress of that work, I hope they will not slightly pass me over. If they should, let them take the consequence; as I here give them fair and timely notice, and they have not to plead as an excuse the want of materials.

I will give you one anecdote more of the great doctor, because it relates to a Scotchman very emi-

nent in the literary world. I had it from Mr Samuel, who was one of the party.

Dr Johnson being one afternoon at the house of Mr Samuel's uncle (whose name I have forgot), who lived in one of the streets that leads from the Strand to the Thames, a number of gentlemen being present, they agreed to cross the water and make a little excursion on the other side; in stepping into the boat one of the company said, "Mr Hume, give me your hand." As soon as they were seated, our doctor asked Mr Samuel, if that was Hume the Deist. Mr Samuel replied, that it was the great Mr Hume, the deep metaphysician and famous historian. "Had I known that (said the doctor) I would not have put a foot in the boat with him." In the evening they had all agreed to sup together at a house near St Clement's church in the Strand, and doctor Johnson coming in after the rest of the company had sometime been met, he walked up to Mr Hume, and taking him by the hand, said, Mr Hume, I am very glad to see you, and seemed well pleased to find him there; and it appeared to Mr Samuel that the doctor had thus chose to atone for his hasty expression before related.

As I do not recollect anything being recorded respecting the doctor's *pugilistic* abilities, (excepting his knocking down Osborn the bookseller be considered as such,) I shall beg leave to relate another anecdote, which I received from the gentleman who favoured me with the preceding one.

Dr Johnson being at the water side when some ladies had just quitted a boat and were endeavouring to settle the fare with the waterman, this son of the Thames, like too many of his brethren, insisted on much more than his due, accompanying his demand, in the usual style of eloquence, with abusive language, the doctor kindly interfering, furnished the ladies with the opportunity of retreating, and transferred the whole abuse to himself, who finding that argument

had made no impression on the waterman, tried what he could effect by the strength of his arm, and gave the refractory fellow a hearty drubbing, which had the desired effect.

One word more concerning our great lexicographer. It must be allowed by every candid and impartial person, that the extreme contempt and prejudice he entertained towards our friends of North Britain reflected a very strong shade on his character, which his warmest admirers cannot justify.

Were I, as a South Briton, called upon to give my fair and unprejudiced opinion respecting the national character of the natives of Scotland and those of England, and I flatter myself I have had ample opportunities of observing the peculiar traits of both countries, I would say, that if we in England excel them in some virtues, they no less shine in others, and if the North Britons possess some peculiar frailties and prejudices, we of the South are not entirely free from ours; so that were the virtues and vices of a certain number of each country placed in an hydrostatical balance (it must however be a pretty large one,) I believe it very difficult to prognosticate which of the two would preponderate. It is true, I have met with one very great villain in Scotland, in Mr S. which only tends to prove there are probably scoundrels to be found everywhere, and that, without taking the trouble which Diogenes did, in search of an honest man; and I am much afraid, were I to enquire of some North Britons, they could without any great difficulty point out to me some of my own countrymen as bad.

I detest all national prejudices, as I think it betrays great weakness in the parties who are influenced by them. Every nation of the habitable globe, nay each particular province of those countries, has certainly some peculiar traits belonging to it which distinguish it from its neighbours. But if we are disposed to view one another with the severity of criticism, how easy, nay, how frequently do we discover

superior virtues (as we think) as well as abilities in that particular spot which gave birth to ourselves, and equally divested of that strict impartiality which alone can enable us to judge properly, discover proportionable blemishes in the natives of other countries?

"But travellers who want the will
To mark the shapes of good and ill,
With vacant stare through Europe range,
And deem all bad, because 'tis strange.
Through varying modes of life, we trace
The finer trait, the latent grace,
Quite free from spleen's incumb'ring load,
At little evils on the road;
So while the path of life I tread,
A path to me with briars spread;
Let me its tangled mazes spy,
Like you, with gay, good humour'd eye,
And be my spirit light as air,
Call life a jest, and laugh at care."

In saying thus much, I do not mean to infer that we ought not to be inspired with a laudable ambition to excel, not those of other countries only, but even those with whom we are more intimately connected but that should be done without drawing invidious comparisons of the merits or demerits of others. In short, let it be the earnest endeavour of each country, and every individual of that country in particular, united under our amiable monarch, to strive which shall have a superior claim to the title of being good men, useful members of society, friends to the whole human race, and peaceable subjects of a government, which though not absolutely in a state of perfection, (and can that man be really deemed wise who expects to meet with perfection in any human establishment?) is still happily superior to every other in the known world.

But to return to Edinburgh. The old town, so called, has not much to boast of; but the new town is by far the most complete and elegant I ever saw

In various towns of England and Scotland, I have indeed seen some good streets, and many good houses; but in this the whole is uniformly fine; not one house, much less a whole street, that can be termed indifferent in the whole town.

And here let me do justice to North British hospitality, and their very polite attention to such Englishmen who happen to travel to the "land of cakes." I can truly say, that the polite and friendly behaviour of the inhabitants towards Mrs Lackington and myself claims our warmest gratitude and sincerest thanks. This the more civilized part of my countrymen will readily believe; and as to those of another description (happily but a comparatively small number, I trust) are welcome to treat my assertion with that contempt usually attendant on prejudice, which is the result of ignorance.

The subject I now mean to enter into being a delicate one, permit me here to close my letter; thus affording you a short respite, and myself a little time for consideration, on the propriety of submitting my ideas (as you seem determined all those I send you shall be) to public notice.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XLV.

" Set woman in his eye, and in his walk,
Among daughters of men the fairest found,
Many are in each region passing fair
As the noon sky, more like to goddesses
Than mortal creatures; graceful and discreet,
Expert in amorous arts, enchanting tongues:
Persuasive, virgin majesty, with mild
And sweet allay'd, yet terrible to approach;
Skill'd to retire, and in retiring draw
Hearts after them, tangled in amorous nets;
Such objects have the power to soften and tame
Severest temper, smooth the rugged'st brow,
Enerve and with voluptuous hope dissolve;
Draw out with credulous desire,
At will, the manliest, resolutest, breast."

DEAR FRIEND,

IN my last I expressed some diffidence respecting the propriety of committing to paper my thoughts on a particular subject; I have since weighed it with due caution, and the consideration of my having during the long course of my epistolary correspondence always declared my sentiments freely on every subject, soon determined me not to degrade myself by shrinking back, now it is so near drawing to a conclusion.

The subject then is—that bright lovely part of the creation, *woman!*——the source of all our joys, the assuager of all our griefs; deprived of whose powerful and attractive charms, man would be a wretch indeed. But alas! the utmost efforts of my abilities are far inadequate to do justice to their merits; happily that pleasing theme has engaged the attention of the ablest and worthiest of men, from the remotest period

down to the present time; and I trust ever will, nay must, so long as a spark of virtue remains in the human breast.

"Weak tho' her frame, nor hers to yield
To steel, to fire, to dart, or shield;
Vain are th' embattled warrior's arms—
No proof 'gainst beauty's heav'nly charms;
Beauty! whose smiles, with soft control,
At once can pierce him to the soul."

FAWKES'S Anacreon.

And when I reflect that

"They are not only fair, but just as fair,'

I have nought to fear.

I therefore proceed with cheerfulness to say, that in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Sterling, &c., there are more really fine women to be found than in any place I ever visited. I do not mean to say that we have not as many handsome women in England; but the idea I wish to convey is, that we have not so many in proportion: that is, go to any public place where a number of ladies are assembled, in either of the above towns, and then go to any place in England where an equal number are met, and you will notice a greater number of fine women among the former than among the latter. It must be obvious that, in making this declaration, I allude to the genteeler part; for among the lower classes of women in Scotland, by being more exposed to the inclemency of the weather, the majority are very homely, and the want of the advantages of apparel, (which those in a higher sphere can avail themselves of, and know how to apply) together with their sluttish and negligent appearance, does not tend in the least to heighten their charms.

Having both read and heard much related of the manner of washing their linen, which I must confess I could not credit without having ocular demonstration, during my continuance at Glasgow, curiosity led me to the mead by the river side. For the poor

women here, instead of the water coming to them, as in London, are obliged to travel loaded with their linen to the water; where you may see great numbers washing, in their way; which if seen by some of our London prudes, would incline them to form very unjust and uncharitable ideas of the modesty of these Scottish lasses. Many of them give a trifle to be accommodated with the use of a large wash-house near the water, where about a hundred may be furnished with every convenience for their purpose; but by far the greatest part make fires, and heat the water in the open air, and as they finish their linen they spread it on the grass to dry, which is the universal mode of drying throughout Scotland. Here the

"Maidens bleach their summer smocks."

I had walked to and fro several times, and began to conclude that the custom of getting into the tubs and treading on the linen, either never had been practised, or was come into disuse; but I had not waited more than half an hour, when many of them jumped into the tubs without shoes or stockings, with their petticoats drawn up far above the knees, and stamped away with great composure in their countenances, and with all their strength, no Scotchman taking the least notice, or even looking towards them, constant habit having rendered the scene perfectly familiar.

On conversing with some gentlemen of Glasgow on this curious subject, they assured me that these singular laundresses (as they appeared to me) were strictly modest women, who only did what others of unblemished reputation had been accustomed to for a long series of years; and added, that at any other time a purse of gold would not tempt them to draw the curtain so high. By way of contrast let me observe that many of our London servant-maids, though not always so nice in other respects, would not be

seen thus habited in public on any terms, lest their precious characters should be called in question. A striking instance of the powerful influence of habit! Pomfret says,

"Custom, the world's great idol, we adore,
And knowing that, we seek to know no more."

Most of the female servants in Edinburgh, Glasglow, &c., do all their work, and run about the town the fore part of the day without stays, shoes or stockings; and on Sundays I saw the countrywomen going towards kirk in the same manner (stays excepted;) however, they do not go into kirk till they have dressed their legs and feet; for that purpose they seat themselves on the grass somewhere near, put on their shoes and stockings, and garter up very deliberately.

"Nor heed the passenger who looks that way."

Most of those poor young countrywomen go without any caps or hats: they have in general fine heads of hair; many plait it, others let it hang loose down their backs; and I assure you, my friend, they look very agreeable.

I returned each time through Buxton, where staying a week or two, I visited Castleton, and spent several hours in exploring that stupendous cavern, called the Devil's A—— in the Peake. I also surveyed Poole's Hole, near Buxton, and purchased a great variety of petrifactions. In our way home I saw the great marble manufactory at Aston, in the water, spent some days at Matlock, the most romantic village that I ever saw, but the sight of it cost me dear; as we were conveyed there in an old crazy post-chaise, in which I caught a violent cold, the lining being very damp.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XLVI.

" Good scene expected, evil unforeseen,
Appear by turns as fortune shifts the scene:
Some rais'd aloft come tumbling down amain,
Then fall so hard, they bound and rise again."
DRYDEN's Virgil.

" New turns and changes every day
Are of inconstant chance the constant arts
Soon fortune gives, soon takes away,
She comes, embraces, nauseates you, and parts.
But if she stays or if she goes,
The wise man little joy or little sorrow knows;
For over all there hangs a doubtful fate,
And few there be that're always fortunate.
One gains by what another is bereft:
The frugal destinies have only left
A common bank of happiness below,
Maintain'd, like nature, by an ebb and flow."
How's Indian Emperor.

DEAR FRIEND,

I DID not intend to trouble you or the public with an account of any more of my wonderful travels, but being now at Lyme, for want of other amusement this rainy morning, I thought that a short account of this journey might afford you some entertainment.

My state of health being but indifferent, and Mrs Lackington's still worse, I was induced to try what effect a journey would produce;

" When med'cine fails, amusement should be sought,
Though but to soothe the miseries of thought."

It being immaterial what part I travelled to, and as I had not for a long time seen my native place, and perhaps might not be furnished with another opportunity, we resolved to visit it.

" And many a year elaps'd, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast———————
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to shew my book-learn'd skill.
Yes, let the rich deride, with proud disdain,
The simple blessings of the lowly train,
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art;
Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway:
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfin'd." GOLDSMITH.

Accordingly in July last, 1791, we set out from Merton, which I now make my chief residence, taking Bath, Bristol, &c., in our way to my native place Wellington.

In Bristol, Exbridge, Bridgewater, Taunton, Wellington, and other places, I amused myself with calling on some of my masters, with whom I had about twenty years before worked as a journeyman shoemaker. I addressed each with, " Pray, sir, have you got any occasion?" which is the term made use of by journeymen in that useful occupation, when seeking employment. Most of those honest men had quite forgot my person, as many of them had not seen me since I worked for them: so that it is not easy for you to conceive with what surprise and astonishment they gazed on me. For you must know that I had the vanity (I call it humour) to do this in my chariot, attended by my servants; and on telling them who I was, all appeared to be very happy to see me.

" Upsprings, at every step, to claim a tear,
Some little friendship form'd and cherish'd here."

And I assure you, my friend, it afforded much real pleasure to see so many of my old acquaintances alive and well, and tolerably happy. The following lines often occurred to my mind·

" Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray:
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They keep the noiseless tenor of their way."

At Taunton and Wellington it seemed the unanimous determination of all the poorest sort, that I should by no means be deficient in old acquaintance.

" Faithful mem'ry wakes each past delight,
Each youthful transport bursting on the sight,
Equal in years when frolic sports display,
And Phœbus gladdens with a brighter ray."
GREEN'S Apollonius Rhodius.

Some poor souls declared that they had known me for fifty years (that is, years before I was born;) others had danced me in their arms a thousand times; nay, better still, some knew my grandmother; but, best of all, one old man claimed acquaintance with me, for having seen me many times on the top of a six-and-twenty round ladder, balanced on the chin of a merry Andrew! The old man was however egregiously mistaken, as I never was so precariously exalted, my ambition, as you well know, taking a very different turn. But that was of no consequence: all the old fellow wanted was a shilling—and I gave it him. No matter (as Sterne says) from what motive. I never examine into these things. This I observed, that none of them were common beggars, but poor useful labouring people; (giving to common strollers is but encouraging idleness and every other vice;) and as small matters made many happy, I was supremely so to be the means of contributing to their comfort. And indeed who would hesitate at being the means of diffusing happiness on such easy terms, and with so little trouble?

" His faithful kin, though forty times remov'd,
Will let him hear how tenderly he's lov'd;
Silence when he harangues will ne'er be broke,
But ev'ry tongue repeat his poorest joke."

The bells rang merrily all the day of my arrival. I was also honoured with the attention of many of the most respectable people in and near Wellington and other parts: some of whom were pleased to inform me, that the reason of their paying a particular attention to me was their having heard, and now having themselves an opportunity of observing, that I did not so far forget myself, as many proud upstarts had done; that the notice I took of my poor relations and old acquaintance merited the respect and approbation of every real gentleman.

"By dear experience every day we find,
That riches commonly degrade the mind,
That he who, train'd through want's instructive school,
Had prov'd a man of sense, becomes a fool.
As dirt on all beneath himself looks down,
Nor feels for any sorrow but his own."

ROBERTSON'S Miscellanies.

They were also pleased to express a wish, that as soon as I could dispose of my business, I would come down and spend the remainder of my days among them. Those ideas were pleasing to me, and perhaps may be realized; I wish it may be soon.

"There could I trifle carelessly away,
The milder evening of life's clouded day.
From business, and the world's intrusion free,
With books, with love, with friendship and with thee,
No farther want, no wish yet unpossest,
Could e'er disturb my unambitious breast."

This reception was the more pleasing, as I have sometimes observed a contrary conduct practised by some who have been pleased to stile themselves gentlemen, and on that score think they have a right to treat men of business (however respectable they may be) as by much their inferiors; and it too often happens that one of those petty gentry who possess but a hundred or two per annum, will behave in a haughty manner to a man of business who spends as many

thousands; but such should be told, that a real gentleman in any company will never either by word or action attempt to make the meanest person feel his inferiority, but on the contrary.

They should be informed also how highly impolitic and unjust it is to attempt to fix a stigma on trade and commerce, the very things that have caused England to rise so high in the political scale of Europe.

"———— Mighty commerce hail!
By thee the sons of Attic's sterile land,
A scanty number, laws imposed on Greece,
Nor aw'd they Greece alone; vast Asia's king,
Though girt by rich arm'd myriads, at their frown
Felt his heart wither on his farthest throne.
Perennial source of population thou!
While scanty peasants plough the flow'ry plains,
What swarms of useful citizens spring up,
Hatch'd by thy softening wing!"

GRAINGER'S Sugar-cane.

'Tis true that even in England you may see great numbers of very opulent tradesmen who have not had an idea but what they have acquired behind the counter; but you may also find many thousands of the same class of life who are possessed of very liberal ideas, and who would not commit an action that would disgrace a title.

"In England (says Thicknesse) one may trust the honour of a respectable tradesman; in France and Flanders I never experienced a single instance of it." (He adds) "And an English merchant, who has resided many years at Marseilles, assured me that there was not a merchant in that great city, who would not only over-reach him if he could, but would boast also all over the town of having so done." And I think that we may easily account for this very great difference in the national characters of merchants and tradesmen. On the continent, merchants and tradesmen are looked upon in a degrading point of view, merely for being of that class; nor would the most

honourable or respectable behaviour ever raise them in the ideas or estimation of the nobles or gentry, who are taught to treat them with neglect, and even contempt. Thus being deprived of that great motive to noble or liberal actions, the love of honour, rank, the notice of the great, &c. &c., their minds become depressed and degraded; whilst in England the merchants and respectable tradesmen being held in higher estimation, and often admitted to the company, conversation, and honours of higher classes, the sordid mind by degrees imbibes more liberal sentiments, and the rough manners receive a degree of polish. For my part, I will endeavour to adhere to the advice given by Persius, as it is translated.

> " Study thyself what rank, or what degree
> The wise Creator has ordain'd for thee:
> And all the offices of that state
> Perform; and with thy prudence guide thy fate."

William Jones, esq., of Foxdowne, near Wellington, informed me of a remarkable prognostication in my favour; he told me that when I was a boy, about twelve years of age, Mr Paul, then a very considerable wholesale linendraper, in Friday street, London, (I believe still living) passing by my father's house one day, stopped at the door and asked various questions about some guinea-pigs which I had in a box. My answers, it seems, pleased and surprised him, and turning towards Mr Jones, said, " Depend upon it, sir, that boy will one day rise far above the situation that his present mean circumstances seem to promise." So who knows what a great man I may yet be?—perhaps

> " A double pica in the book of fame!"

Give me leave to introduce another prediction, though not altogether so pleasing as that just related. An Italian gentleman, and if we may judge by appearance, a person of rank, was some years since

looking at some books of palmistry in my shop, and at the same time endeavoured to convince me of the reality of that science. In the midst of his discourse, he suddenly seized my right hand, and looking for some time with great attention on the various lines, he informed me that I had twice been in danger of losing my life, once by water, and once by a wound in my head: he was certainly right, but I believe by chance, as I have many other times been in very great danger. He added, that I had much of the goddess Venus in me, but much more of Mars; and assured me that I should go to the wars, and arrive at great honour. He likewise informed me, that I should die by fire-arms pointed over a wall.—How far the former part of this gentleman's prediction may be relied on, I will not pretend to decide, but the last part of it was lately very near coming to such a decision as would have proved the fallibility of that part of his prognostication, though even in that case he might have pleaded his being pretty near the matter of fact, only substituting gunpowder instead of fire-arms, and I should not have had it in my power to contend the point with him. I will endeavour to render this intelligible: On Tuesday, the fifth of July 1791, I very nearly escaped being blown up with the powder-mills belonging to Mr Bridges, at Ewell, near Merton in Surrey. A quarter of an hour before that event took place, I was riding out within one mile of the mills, and having enquired of Mr Rose, at Coombe Farm, for the way that leads round by the mills, I actually rode part of the way, with an intent of visiting them. But somehow or other, I scarce knew why, I turned my horse about, and a few minutes after I had done so I saw the fatal catastrophe; which happening by day, resembled a large cloud of smoke, of a very light colour, and the report reached my ears immediately after. I instantly concluded it could be nothing less than the powder-mills blown up; and on my return to my house at Merton I soon learnt that it was th:

very identical powder-mill that in all probability I should have been in, or close by, at the time of the explosion. By this accident it seems four men were killed, some of whom had large families. The bodies were so much mangled by the explosion, that they could not be distinguished from each other, and the head of one of them was thrown to a great distance.

But to proceed with my journey: I esteem myself peculiarly happy, on one account in particular, that I undertook it; and have only to regret it did not take place sooner, as it tended to undeceive me in a matter in which I had long been in an error. The case was this: I had for seven years past supposed that the parents of my first wife were dead; and on enquiring after them of Mr Cash, at Bridgewater, he confirmed the report. However, as we passed through North Petherton, being but a mile from the place where they formerly lived, I could not help stopping to find out the time when they died, and what other particulars I could learn relative to them; but, to my very great surprise, I was informed that they were both living at Newton, two miles distant. On this information I gave the coachman orders to drive us there, but still could scarcely credit that they really were alive.—But oh, my dear friend, it is utterly impossible for me to describe the sensations of Mrs Lackington and myself on entering

——————— "The cobwebb'd cottage,
With ragged wall of mould'ring mud."

which contained them!

"Then poverty, grim spectre, rose,
And horror o'er the prospect threw." AMWELL.

There we found—two

"Poor human ruins, tottering o'er the grave."

The dim light on our entrance seemed a little to flash in the socket, and every moment threatened to dis-

appear for ever! while their "pale withered hands were stretched out towards me, trembling at once with eagerness and age." Never before did I feel the full force of Shakspeare's description,

——————— " Last scene of al!
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness, and mere oblivion :
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything."

From such a state of poverty and wretchedness, good God, deliver every worthy character.

The old man is ninety years of age, and the good old woman eighty. The old man's intellects are much impaired; he for a moment knew me, and then his recollection forsook him. His behaviour brought to my mind the passage in the Odyssey, where the good old man meets his long-lost son.

" He faints, he sinks, with mighty joys opprest,
But as returning life regains its seat,
And his breath lengthens, and his pulses beat,
Yes, I believe, he cries, aimighty Jove!
Heav'n rules as yet, and gods there are above."

The old woman retained her senses and knowledge during the whole of the time we were with them.

" They breath'd their prayer, long may such goodness live!
'Twas all they gave, 'twas all they had to give."

On enquiry I found, that what little property they had possessed had been all expended for some years.

" How many once in Fortune's lap high fed,
Solicit the cold hand of charity
To shock us more—solicit in vain!"

DR YOUNG.

Amidst this dreary scene, it was some alleviation to learn that their pious son had given them weekly as much as he could afford from his own little family, and I have added enough to render them as comfortable as their great age can possibly admit of. But

for your sake and my own, I will drop this gloomy subject, which to me proved one of the most affecting scenes that ever I experienced in the whole course of my life; and I believe that had I not afforded them relief, the dreary scene would have followed my haunted imagination to the grave. It is a fine speech that Metastasio puts into the mouth of Titus.

"What wouldst thou leave me, friend, if thou deniest me
The glorious privilege of doing good?
Shall I my only joy forego;
No more my kind protection shew
To those by fortune's frown pursu'd
No more exalt each virtuous friend,
No more a bounteous hand extend,
T' enrich the worthy and the good?" HOOLE.

During our continuance at Wellington, I one morning rode over to Black Down, on purpose to inspect an immense heap of stones on the top of the hill, straight before the town, which I remembered to have seen when a boy. The distance from Wellington is about two miles. These stones cover about an acre of ground, and rise to a great height. The country people informed me with great gravity, that "the devil brought them there in one night in his leathern apron." But the name of it, as well as the form, proves what it was. It is called Symmon's Borough or Barrow, which, you know, signifies a burial-place. I should not have taken any notice of it here, had I ever seen any barrow of stones besides this and five other smaller barrows about half a mile from the large one. The country people informed me that the devil brought the five heaps there in his glove. I also observed the remains of a large camp near the spot. Camden has taken notice of a large camp at Roach Castle, three or four miles from hence; it is strange that neither he nor Gough should take any notice of so singular a barrow as this certainly is.

I am, dear friend, yours.

LETTER XLVII.

" Ye who amid this feverish world would wear
A body free of pain, of cares the mind,
Fly the rank city; shun its turbid air:
Breathe not the chaos of eternal smoke
And volatile corruption from the dead,
The dying, sickening, and the living world
Exhal'd, to sully heaven's transparent dome
With dim mortality. It is not air
That from a thousand lungs reeks back to thine,
Sated with exhalations, rank and fell,
The spoil of dunghills, and the putrid thaw
Of Nature; when from shape and texture she
Relapsed into fighting elements.
It is not air, but floats a nauseous mass
Of all obscene, corrupt, offensive things,
Much moisture hurts: here a sordid bath,
With daily rancour fraught, relaxes more
The solids than simple moisture can."

ARMSTRONG's Art of Health.

Lyme, Sept. 4, 1791.

DEAR FRIEND,

BEING now at one of those places usually called watering places, that is, a place where invalids resort in great numbers for the real or pretended purpose of drinking the waters for which each particular situation is in repute, and bathing in them with a view to the restoration of their health; I shall trouble you with a few observations which have occurred to me on the subject. I cannot entertain a doubt but that many by this practice have been highly benefited; but at the same time I must observe that such relief is only to be reasonably expected where the parties possess a sufficient share of prudence to conform to those rules which are laid down to them by those

who are best acquainted with the nature of the several complaints, the strength or weakness of their constitutions, and the different virtues those several waters possess, so as properly to adapt them to each particular case, by drinking the waters at proper stated periods, as well as in proper doses: besides conforming to such a regimen as shall co-operate with them in producing the desired effect. But, where invalids neglect all, or indeed any of those rules, is it not rather an absurdity to expect relief?—I will endeavour to explain myself:

Those waters either possess powerful virtues, or they do not. If they do, is it not obvious that some judgment and caution is necessary in the use of them, which must either produce good or bad effects, according to the prudence with which they are applied? If, on the other hand, they are of so insignificant a nature, that they may be used at any time, and in any proportion, without injury; and that too in disorders and constitutions very much varying from each other, then surely the inference must be, that no dependence is to be placed on them, and consequently it matters not if they are never used at all. For what purpose then do such numbers put themselves to the inconvenience, expense, and trouble, of travelling (frequently from distant parts of the kingdom) and that too when many of them are in so debilitated a state, that their very removal is attended with extreme danger, and sometimes proves fatal? But that those waters are not inactive, I am well convinced, having seen the bad effects arising from the imprudent use of them, in many instances, as well as the happy consequences attending their being used with due caution.

I was first led into these reflections by having been highly diverted, when I visited Buxton several summers, with the preposterous and absurd conduct of some of the company who resorted thither for the purpose of restoring their health. I remember six or seven gentlemen informing me, that they were vio-

lently afflicted with the gout and the rheumatism, and had undertaken this journey in hopes of receiving benefit by the waters. These gentlemen often rode or walked about the cold dreary hills, in very damp wet mornings, and afterwards drank claret from three o'clock in the afternoon to three the next morning; but I did not continue here long enough to be a witness of the happy effects which must inevitably be produced by a perseverance in such a judicious regimen.

I also visited Freestone, near Boston, in Lincolnshire, to which place a number of tradesmen and farmers resorted with their wives, in hopes of receiving benefit from the use of the salt water, in a variety of complaints; which they had been advised to do by the faculty, for a month, with particular directions to bathe every other day, and on the intermediate days to drink half a pint of the water in the course of that day. But these wise people, on duly considering the matter, were fully convinced that this would detain them from their families and business longer than was altogether convenient; and also (which they supposed their medical friends never thought of) that they could bathe the full number of times, and drink the prescribed quantity of the water in a week or a fortnight at farthest, and thus not only expedite the cure, but likewise enable them to return to their families and business so much earlier, as well as save the necessary expenses attending their continuing for such a length of time at the watering place. These united considerations appeared to them so consistent with prudence and economy, that they resolved to put them into immediate practice. I remonstrated with several of these good people on the impropriety of their conduct; but whether they concluded I was a party interested in detaining them on the spot, or whether they deemed my judgment inferior to their own, I know not; but I observed that some of them bathed several times in a day, and

drank salt water by the quart, the consequence of which was, that they left the place when the time expired which they had prescribed to themselves, much worse than they came. Some indeed were so very weak, that I am persuaded they could with difficulty reach their homes alive. And in these cases the want of success, instead of being attributed to the folly of the patients, is generally transferred to the waters, and to the want of judgment in those who advised the use of them.

I assure you, my dear friend, this is pretty much the case at Lyme. My rooms commanding a view of the sea, I have this and several other days noticed many decent looking men going down the beach three or four times in as many hours, and drinking a pint of water each time. I have made the same observation at Margate, Brighton, Hastings, Eastbourne, Seaton, Charmouth, and other places, so that the observation of Crabshaw's nurse, in "The Adventures of Sir Lancelot Greaves,' has frequently occurred to me: "Blessed be G— (said she) my patient is in a fair way! His apozem has had a blessed effect! Five-and-twenty stools since three o'clock in the morning!"

Relating these particulars to a medical friend, he informed me that such specimens of ignorance and obstinacy were by no means confined to the watering places; as he had in the course of his practice met with repeated instances, where patients with a view of hastening the cure, and getting out of the doctor's hands (whom the vulgar charitably suppose wish to retain them there as long as possible) have swallowed a half pint mixture intended for several doses at once, and a whole box of pills in the same manner. The consequence of which have been, that from the violence of the operations they have remained in his hands a considerable time—some so long as life (thus foolishly trifled with) lasted.

But here are many of another class, some of whom, though not all, came on purpose to bathe, but during the whole of their continuance here, never found

time to bathe once. Some hasten to the billiard-room as soon as they are out of their beds in the morning, and there they continue until bed-time again. A few of these are indeed much benefited, being cured of consumptions in their purses, while others become proportionably as much emaciated. And a great number, both of ladies and gentlemen, devote the whole of their time to dressing, eating, and playing at whist. Charming exercise it must be! as they frequently sit still in their chairs for eight or ten hours together.

" Where knights, and beaux, and lords, and sharpers run,
Some to undo, but more to be undone.
Of all the plagues that from the birth of time,
Have rang'd by turns this sublunary clime,
And in their various forms the nations curs'd,
The boundless love of play is sure the worst."

WHIST: a Poem.

Here are others again, who, like the genelemen at Buxton, sit drinking (often red port after salt-water) until three or four in the morning, making a delightful noise, to compose those in the same house who are real invalids, and who, desirous of obtaining rest, retire early, though frequently to very little purpose.

I have also observed, that all the above places are as healthy for horses as they are for their masters. For as the innkeepers depend almost entirely on the season, they take great care, and do all they can to make these places comfortable. So that if gentlemen have fat, lazy, prancing horses, and want to reduce them in size and temper, they may be sure to have it done in some of the inns and stables at the various watering places, where such hay is procured as must infallibly answer the purpose, even though they be allowed a double portion of corn.

There is yet another very great advantage (which I had like to have forgot) resulting from attending the watering places. Such gentlemen who happen to have servants too honest, too industrious, too atten-

tive, too cleanly, too humble, too sober, &c., by taking them to any of these places, where they have so much leisure time, and where these party-coloured gentry meet together so often, and in such numbers, no one can go away unimproved, except he is a very dull fellow indeed. This is not merely my own observation; for several gentlemen of my acquaintance assured me that they had always found their servants improved prodigiously after each of these excursions

We purpose setting out for Weymouth in a day or two: but as I intend that this shall be my last epistle, I will not conclude it until I arrive at Merton.

"If into distant parts I vainly roam,
And novelty from various objects try,
My busy thoughts reseek their wonted home,
And sicken at the vain variety."

Merton, September 11th.—We arrived here safe last night, being my birth-day. At Weymouth we had the honour of walking several evenings on the Esplanade, with their majesties and the four princesses. His majesty seems in perfect health and spirits, and diffuses life and spirits to all around him. Long, very long, may he continue to enjoy the same degree of health and happiness! But I could not help pitying Mr Hughes, the manager of the theatre there; as the company in general seem to pay but very little attention to plays, while they can partake of the pleasure of walking and breathing the sea air with so many of the royal family. But his majesty, whose humanity is by no means the least of his many virtues, will no doubt consider Mr Hughes, who is industrious to an extreme, as he is scarce a moment idle. For besides managing his company, performing himself six, sometimes eight, characters in a week, he paints all his own scenes, and attends to many other subjects; and although he has had a large expensive family (nine children,) the theatre there, and that also at Exeter, is his own. Wey-

mouth theatre he rebuilt about four years since; everything is very neat; his scenes are fine, and his company a very good one. I saw them perform four pieces with a deal of pleasure, notwithstanding I had often seen the same in London. I remarked here as I had long before done at Bath, that the parts were more equally supported than they often are at Drury lane and Covent garden; for although at those places we have many first-rate actors and actresses, yet sometimes parts are given to such wretched performers as would not grace a barn, which I never saw done at Bath or Weymouth.

In our road home, within half a mile of Dorchester, we stopped and spent half an hour in looking round the famous Roman amphitheatre. It is close to the road on the right hand side, and covers about an acre of ground. It is judged that ten thousand people might without interruption have beheld such exercises as were exhibited in this school of the ancients; it is called Mambury, and is supposed to be the completest antiquity of the kind in England.

I also amused myself, as I travelled through Dorsetshire and Wiltshire, in surveying many of the numerous camps, fortifications, and barrows; which lasting monuments of antiquity are to be seen in abundance in these counties, a great number of them remaining in a perfect state.

Nor could I any longer omit the opportunity of seeing that stupendous piece of antiquity on Salisbury Plain, the famous Stonehenge, two miles from Amesbury. We spent near two hours there in astonishment, and had not night come on, we should not have been able to have parted from it so soon. We found a good inn at Amesbury, which proves very convenient to such whom curiosity may detain on this wonderful spot until it is late. It is remarkable, that although so many able antiquaries have devoted their time and attention to the investigation of Stonehenge, it remains still a matter undecided when

and for what purpose this amazing pile was formed; nor is there less cause of admiration, how stones of such magnitude were brought hither! I shall not presume either to decide on this curious point, or offer any conjectures of my own.

I have now, sir, not only given you the most material circumstances of my life, but have also superadded a short sketch of some of my travels. And should the fine air of Merton preserve the stock of health and spirits which I have acquired in this last excursion, I intend during the summer to spend a few hours in the middle of three or four days in every week in Chiswell street, devoting the mornings and the remainder of the evenings to my rural retreat.

"Where Cheerfulness, triumphant fair,
Dispels the painful cloud of care,
Oh sweet of language, mild of mien,
Oh, virtue's friend, and pleasure's queen
By thee our board with flow'rs is crown'd,
By thee with songs our walks resound;
By thee the sprightly mornings shine,
And evening hours in peace decline."

As my house at Merton is not far from the church yard, I was a few evenings since walking in this receptacle of mortality, and recollecting the scene between sir Lucius O'Trigger and Acres, said to myself, "Here is good snug lying in this place." So I sat down on one of the graves, and wrote the following lines, which I hope when I am gone to heaven (I am not in haste) my friends will have engraved on my tomb-stone.

LACKINGTON'S EPITAPH.

Good passenger, one moment stay,
And contemplate this heap of clay;
'Tis Lackington that claims a pause,
Who strove with death, but lost his cause;

A stranger genius ne'er need be,
Than many a merry year was he.
Some faults he had; some virtues too;
(The devil himself should have his due:)
And as dame Fortune's wheel turn'd round,
Whether at top or bottom found,
He never once forgot his station,
Nor e'er disown'd a poor relation;
In poverty he found content,
Riches ne'er made him insolent.
When poor, he'd rather read than eat;
When rich, books form'd his highest treat.
His first great wish, to act with care
The several parts assign'd him here;
And, as his heart to truth inclin'd,
He studied hard the truth to find.
Much pride he had, 'twas love of fame,
And slighted gold, to get a name;
But fame herself prov'd greatest gain,
For riches follow'd in her train.
Much had he read, and much had thought,
And yet, you see, he's come to naught;
Or out of print, as he would say,
To be revis'd some future day;
Free from errata, with addition,
A new, and a complete edition.

During the winter I purpose spending most of my time in town, where I hope again to enjoy the company of you, sir, and some others of our philosophical friends; and when tired of philosophizing, we will again sing our old verses,

"What tho' the many wholly bend,
To things beneath our state,
Some poorly to be rich contend,
And others meanly great.

There liv'd a few in ev'ry space,
Since first our kind began,
Who still maintain'd with better grace
The dignity of man."

In the meantime, I am, dear friend, yours.

P. S. I should deem myself deficient in point of justice to the ingenious artist who painted the portrait from whence the engraving affixed as a frontispiece to this volume is taken, if I did not embrace this opportunity of acknowledging the approbation it has been honoured with by all who have seen it, as a striking likeness.

The following circumstance, though to many it may appear in a ludicrous point of view, yet as it is a fact which does not depend solely on my assertion, I shall not heitate to mention it.

Before the portrait was finished, Mrs Lackington, accompanied by another lady, called on the painter to view it. Being introduced into a room filled with portraits, her little dog (the faithful Argus) being with her, immediately ran to that particular portrait, paying it the same attention as he is always accustomed to do the original; which made it necessary to remove him from it, lest he should damage it; though this was not accomplished without expressions of dissatisfaction on the part of poor Argus.

"He knew his lord, he knew and strove to meet,
And all he could, his tail, his ears, his eyes,
Salute his master, and confess his joys."

POPE's Odyssey.

Those who are conversant in history will not doubt the fact; several similar instances being recorded of the sagacity and nice discrimination of these animals.

A PRAYER.

"O may my work for ever live!
(Dear friend, this selfish zeal forgive:)
May no vile miscreant saucy cook
Presume to tear my learned book,
To singe his fowl for nicer guest,
Or pin it on the turkey's breast.
Keep it from pastry bak'd or buying,
From broiling steak, and fritters frying;

From lighting pipes or wrapping snuff,
Or casing up a feather muff;
From all the several ways the grocer
(Who to the learned world's a foe, sir,)
Has found in twisting, folding, packing,
His brain and ours at once a racking:
And may it never curl the head
Of either living block or dead.
Thus when all dangers they have past,
My leaves like leaves of brass shall last.
No blast shall from a critic's breath,
By vile infection cause their death.
'Till they in flames at last expire,
And help to set the world on fire.

AMEN.

SEQUEL

TO THE

LIFE OF JAMES LACKINGTON.

The Autobiographical labours of this most eccentric of booksellers did not terminate with the foregoing publication, which was succeeded in 1803 by a small nondescript volume, entitled "The Confessions of J. Lackington, late bookseller at the Temple of the Muses, in a Series of Letters to a Friend." The following extract from the preface will shew the change of mind and of circumstances which led Mr Lackington to regard himself as compelled by duty to favour the world with a few further particulars of his life: unhappily they form a very disproportionate supply of matter of fact, for a large share of observation and opinion, of which the oddity and self-sufficiency are frequently much more apparent than the modesty or good sense.

"Several of my friends have thought that, if the following letters were made public, they might prove useful as a warning to others not to fall into those errors which had nearly proved fatal to me; and also as an alarm to some of those who are already fallen into that dreadful state of infidelity from which, by the great mercy of God, I am happily escaped.

"They were also of opinion, that as I had publicly ridiculed a very large and respectable body of Christians, and thus, in fact, made a thrust at the very vitals

of Christianity itself, by this means giving occasion to speculative infidels and practical unbelievers to triumph and blaspheme; that therefore my recantation ought to be made as public as possible, and that by so doing I should give great pleasure to many real Christians, who, with the angels in heaven, will rejoice over a repenting sinner.

"To the preceding reasons the author is obliged to add, that without publishing something of the kind, he thinks he should not have performed his duty to God or man, nor have had any just ground to expect pardon from either—such is his sense and abhorrence of the pernicious and infidel tendency of those parts of his Memoirs, in which, through the side of Methodism, he even wounds the Church of England, and attacks the whole of evangelical piety.

"In order that my readers might be able to form clear ideas of the state of my mind through the whole progress of my present happy change, I thought it best to insert two letters which I wrote while I was an infidel, and others written during my gradual discovery of the truths which are revealed in the scriptures. And I request my readers to take notice, that the first twenty-four letters were all written before I was convinced of the truth of those doctrines which are taught by the Methodists, and also by our reformers, as appears by the liturgy, articles, and homilies of the Church of England.

"I found it necessary to make some small alterations in some of the letters. I have divided what was originally sent to a friend in one long letter into two. In the letter on a death-bed repentance, which was written four years since, I have introduced a quotation from the Farmer's Boy, a poem not published when that letter was written. In some of the other letters additional quotations from the poets have been inserted since they were sent to my friends.

"I have called my old acquaintances by fictitious names, because I would not publicly expose either

those that are dead, or such as are still living; and I presume no one has any reason to complain; for should any of them be known by my sketches, it can only be by such as were acquainted with the originals.

"In one or two instances I have, for particular reasons, made use of a fictitious vehicle to introduce real facts, reasonings, reflections, &c.

"It may be necessary to inform my readers, that I am not (as some suppose) again become a partner in the bookselling trade. It is now five years since I made over the whole of that business to Messrs George Lackington, Allen, and Co., since which time I have had no share or interest in it; and I am very sorry that they last summer published a new edition of the Memoirs of my Life; but I believe they had no intention to disoblige the Methodists, but merely published it as a matter of course to promote their trade. And although I at that time was not pleased with its being republished, yet I did not see the evil tendency which that work certainly has in so strong a light as I have since."

As but a small part of the "Confessions" are in any sense biographical, a few extracts and detached passages from the curious farrago, which partake most of that character, will suffice; and first, as a matter of justice, the author's *amende honorable* to the Wesleyan Methodists:

"In my Memoirs I told you that I married Miss Dorcas Turner. This girl had for some years divided her spare hours between devotion and novel reading; on Sundays she would attend the sermons of two or three of those who are called Calvinist-Methodist preachers; the intervals were often filled up by reading of novels: and after her return from the Tabernacle in the evening, the novel was resumed, and perhaps not quitted until she had seen the hero and heroine happily married, which often kept her out of

bed until morning. On other evenings also she would often hear a sermon at the Tabernacle, and devote the remainder ef the night to reading 'Tales of love and maids forsaken.'

"I had no sooner married this young woman than Mr Wesley's people began to prophecy that I should soon lose all my religion. This prophecy I must confess was too soon fulfilled. And although she was not the sole cause of it, yet, as I often was prevailed upon to hear her read those gay, frothy narratives, I by degrees began to lose my relish for more important subjects; and it was not long before novels, romances, and poets, occupied a considerable part of our time, so that I even neglected my shop; for being so much delighted with those fairy regions, I could scarce bear the idea of business: I also sometimes neglected the preaching at the Foundery, at other times hurried home, impatient until I had again got into the realms of fiction. Some months passed away in this manner. At last I was roused from those dreams, and again I paid attention to my trade.

"I observed, in my Memoirs, that Mr Denis visited me during my long illness, when I was again constantly to be found in my shop. He often called, and having little to do, and being fond of disputation, he would seat himself on the counter, and, as occasion offered, attack me, or any of my customers, on our religious opinions. He was acquainted with the various controversies which have divided the Christian world; and appeared to take delight in pulling systems to pieces, without establishing anything. He owned that he was greatly attached to alchymical and mystical authors; but he would confess that, although he believed some of their writings were dictated by the Spirit of God, yet that he did not pretend to understand them. He allowed that the authors of the Old and New Testaments sometimes wrote as the Spirit dictated, but contended that they had written many things without such assistance; that, like other

pious authors, they at times only wrote their own opinions; so that Mr Denis only believed so much of the bible as he approved of. The divinity of Christ, the doctrine of the atonement, &c., he did not believe. From Jane Leed, madame Bourignon, madame Guion, he had filled his head with associating and concentering with the divinity, which was the way to be all light, all eye, all spirit, all joy, all gladness, all love; pure love, rest in quietness, absorbed in silent spiritual pleasure, and inexpressible sweetness, &c. Mr D. did not attend any place of worship, except the Horse and Groom public-house, near Moorfields, could be called such. In Moorfields he sometimes would hear part of a sermon or two, and for an hour or two after the orations were ended, he was to be seen disputing among the mechanics, who very often came there for that purpose. In the afternoon on Sunday, he would go to the above public-house, where a room full of persons of this description usually met, and one or other of them would first read a chapter in the bible, and afterwards animadvert on what he had read, and as many as were disposed to it added their curious remarks. To this odd group of expositors I was once introduced, but I did not repeat my visit.

"From the disputes in my shop, example, &c., I soon came to think that the sabbath day was no more sacred than any other day; so that instead of attending at places of worship, I sometimes read the whole of the day; at other times I walked in the fields with Mr D., his son, and other disputants, where we debated various subjects.

"I believe when any one willingly neglects public worship, he will not long be attentive to private devotion; it was at least the case with me. I also soon began to entertain doubts concerning the doctrines of the trinity, atonement, &c. And in proportion as I relaxed in Christian duties, I grew more fond of such disputes as had a tendency to make my mind easy on that score.

"About this time Mr R. T—nl—y advised me to read the 'Memoirs of John Buncle,' which I soon procured and read through. This pernicious work, (for such I now think it to be,) at once not only eradicated the remains of Methodism, but also nearly the whole of Christianity.

'Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,
And these, reciprocally, those again;
The mind and conduct mutually imprint
And stamp their image on each other's mint.'

COWPER.

"After the heterogeneous example of John Buncle, I indulged myself in the practice of many things which were inconsistent with the character of a Christian; and yet, like him, I was not willing to suppose those practices were at variance with the most exalted notions of rational Christianity.

"Having, like John Buncle, given up the doctrines of the trinity, original sin, atonement made by Christ, the obligation of the sabbath, &c., and having become negligent of Christian duties, and a little relaxed in morals, it was not likely that I should stop here.

"I think it was in this year (1776) that I became acquainted with one whom I shall call Jack Jolly, and some of his acquaintance, all downright infidels; but otherwise shrewd, sensible men. Of these I learned the names of such authors as had written on the side of infidelity, and also the titles of their pernicious productions.

"I think it was the witty sarcasms and vile misrepresentations of Voltaire that first made me entirely give up my bible, from which I had in past years derived so much real comfort in the most distressing circumstances of great poverty and very great affliction. That precious book enabled me to breakfast, dine, and sup, on watergruel only, not barely with a contented mind, but also with a cheerful countenance

and a merry heart. It was the bible which supported me under the several years' affliction of a beloved wife, in which I truly suffered with her; it was that book which enabled her, although young, to die with joy, and in full and certain hope of a glorious resurrection. When this charming young woman died, I also was given over; my soul was, as it were, hovering on my lips, just ready to depart. In this awful crisis, my amiable wife gone, all around me expecting the moment when time to me should be no longer—

——' The dim lamp of life just feebly left
An agonizing beam, around to gaze,
Then sink back again.'

In this awful situation I remained a long time, how long I know not, perhaps a week or weeks; yet even in this state, although more dead than alive, did the divine promises contained in the sacred pages support and comfort me, so that at that time I was filled with inexpressible pleasure. In those moments I could believe that I was

' A glorious partner with the Deity
In that high attribute, Eternal Life.—
I gaz'd, and as I gaz'd, my mounting soul
Caught fire, Eternity, at thee;
And dropp'd the world.'—

" Say, ye infidels! in your thoughtful moments, why would you deprive your poor fellow mortals of that which alone can support them amidst the complicated miseries to which we are exposed?

" Notwithstanding I had, as I have observed before, been some time relaxing in religious principles and duties, yet no tongue or pen can describe what I felt at times, on relinquishing the volume which contained the words of eternal life: but it was wrenched from me. For I was so destitute of knowledge and abilities, as not to be able to answer the witty and

artful objections of that arch infidel Voltaire, and others whose works soon after I read. I must confess, that I felt it very hard to part from this old constant companion of mine; and should have been glad to have retained its divine consolations, without being bound to obey all its precepts. But as that could not be, after many struggles, I took my leave of that inestimable treasure of wisdom and knowledge.

"Having quite done with the word of God, I soon entirely neglected the public worship of God. Before this I went at times to one or other of Mr Wesley's chapels, or to some parish church. But now I was taught to believe, that as the whole world was God's temple, I could pay my devotions to him at any time and in any place; the consequence you may easily imagine; the divine Being was soon too much out of my thoughts; the sabbath-day was spent in reading pernicious books, or in writing my catalogues, arranging my books, casting up my profits, visiting, &c. And it was not long before I could make a hand at cards on that day.

"As soon as I had gone through Voltaire's pieces, I procured other works of the same tendency, and in reading them I employed most of my spare hours for several years. And although I did not devote so much time to them after this, but read also history, voyages, travels, poetry, novels, &c., yet I often had recourse to them, and took every opportunity of purchasing new publications which had the same pernicious tendency, and also every old one that I was not before possessed of; so that at last I had got nearly the whole of this species of writing which had been published in the English language. I not only procured them, but read them, and some of them several times over, with a pencil in my hand to put marks to the most particular passages.

"I also procured a bible interleaved with blank paper, and transcribed many of the remarks and objections of infidel writers to various texts; and oppo-

site to some texts I even wrote my own objections. Having had such a long acquaintance with the authors in favour of freethinking, I am able to remark that Thomas Paine, and other modern infidels, instead of consulting the bible, have copied the objections to it from those authors that preceded them, which objections have been ably answered, over and over again, by men of deep learning and great ability; those answers I, like other freethinkers, neglected to read until a few years since. Now I have read them, I am ashamed of having been so easily duped and cheated out of my Christianity.

'Vast bodies of philosophy
I oft have seen and read;
But all are bodies dead,
Or bodies by art fashioned.
I never yet the living soul could see,
But in thy book and thee.' COWLEY.

"I will now relate the progress of one of my acquaintance from serious godliness to infidelity. I will call him Dick Thrifty; and I assure you, it is nearly the case with many in the infidel corps. I must first inform you, that most of the freethinkers that I have known in the lower and middle ranks of society, were influenced by religion, at least in appearance.

"Dick Thrifty was near thirty years since, like your old friend, a truly pious man; at least, I am fully persuaded he was perfectly sincere in his religious profession, he being of an open, honest-hearted disposition, incapable of practising any deceit. About the year 1774 and 1775 he read a good deal of polemical divinity, and by this means lost that simplicity and gentleness of disposition so essential to the Christian character. He then got acquainted with some, who having given up one point of Christian doctrine after another, had in the end become downright infidels. These acquaintances advised him to read the

works of Chubb, Tyndal, Morgan, Collins, Shaftesbury, Voltaire, Bolingbroke, Hume, &c. Before Dick had read a quarter part of those books, he, like me and others, quitted his religious connexions. For a short time Dick boasted of being a rational Christian, and talked much of Chubb as being a very sensible, clear writer. After Dick had read Tyndal, Collins, Morgan, and Shaftesbury, he was then a Christian deist. Before Dick had gone through Voltaire's deistical pieces, he gave up Christ entirely, and was a philosophical deist; and pitied the poor ignorant Christians for suffering themselves to be kept in the dark. But Dick had not quite finished Bolingbroke's philosophical works before he was, from a dignified philosopher, sunk down to a reasoning brute. He had lost his immortal, immaterial part in the labyrinths of metaphysics. Voltaire's 'Ignorant Philosopher' made Dick a sceptic; Helvetius and Hume gave the finishing stroke to the picture; poor Dick was then an atheist!

'Duped by fancy, erring reason stray'd
Through night's black gloom; and with uncertain step
Stumbled from rock to rock.'—

OGILVIE'S Providence.

"Although Dick did not long remain a downright atheist, yet he long continued in a state of distracting doubt and uncertainty; at one time a deist, then doubting of everything, even of his own existence. Now there must be two eternal substances, matter and spirit; and then there can be but one, which must be matter. Sometimes he is quite sure that there is one self-existent being, and that he has an immaterial soul to adore him; then again he is perplexed and distracted with doubts.

'Your crabbed rogues that read Lucretius
Are against gods, you know, and teach us
That atoms dancing round the centre
At last made all things at a venture.'

Whenever I read the following lines, they affect me much, being applicable to myself and many others, as well as to Dick.

'Poor wretch! he read, and read, and read,
Till his brain turned——
He had unlawful thoughts of many things;
He never lov'd to pray
With holy men, nor in a holy place—
——— It is a perilous tale!' WORDSWORTH."

Upon the same principle the following passages have also been selected.

"Yes, sir, by the great mercy of God I am, (as you say,) returned to the study of my bible. You may well be affected with my wonderful escape from such a dreadful precipice, on the crumbling brink of which I long slept. For these last two or three years I have not even loved the sight of that part of my private library where the books stand which seduced me from the simplicity of the gospel. They have been to me will-o'-the-wisps; and I have followed them through bog and quagmire, briars and thorns, until my poor benighted and bewildered mind was lost in such a labyrinth, for it was next to impossible for me ever to find my way out. As I suppose you will be glad to know how so great a deliverance was effected, I will give you a short account of it.

"Notwithstanding the bad lives of some infidels of my acquaintance, as I continued to retain a regard to decency, honour and honesty, myself; and as a few freethinkers are studious, and, to appearance, moral characters, professing to believe in natural religion; while, on the other hand, I have remarked that some were guilty of gross enormities, who yet professed to believe the bible to be the word of God; I, for a long time thought that infidels were as likely to be governed by virtuous principles as Christians were; the vicious lives of some pretenders to Christianity in some measure tended to confirm me in this erroneous

conclusion. I was still more confirmed in this opinion by the plausible reasoning in some infidel writers, who, as you know, talk much about moral rectitude, the eternal rule of right, moral obligation, moral sense, &c. &c. Lord Shaftesbury goes very far on this head. He asserts that vice as much disorders the mind as disease does the body; which no doubt is true. He is also right in asserting, that virtue is moral beauty, and vice moral deformity. But his lordship goes much farther; he, like an ancient sect of heretics, and many modern mystics, says a great deal about loving God and virtue purely for their own sakes, without any regard to future rewards and punishments; that to do good actions in hopes of being rewarded is mercenary; and that persons influenced by such motives are endeavouring to overreach the Deity, by purchasing eternal happiness with a short life of virtue. He insinuates that the old saints, who had respect to the recompense of reward, were cunning people, and only good from the fear of hell and the hope of heaven. How much is this like the devil's objection—Job does not serve God for nought? In another place his lordship asserts that there is no more rectitude, piety, or sanctity, in a creature thus reformed, than there is meekness or gentleness in a tiger strongly chained, or innocence and sobriety in a monkey under the discipline of the whip.

"If the rewards proposed to Christians had been like those promised by Mahomet to his followers, sensual and voluptuous, his lordship would have had some reason to object to their being proposed as incentives to virtue; but the idea given us in the New Testament of the happiness in a future state is noble and sublime. It is represented as 'a state of consummate holiness, goodness, and purity, where we shall arrive to the true perfection of our natures; a state into which nothing shall enter that defileth; where the spirits of the just are made perfect, and even their bodies shall be refined to a wonderful degree; where

they shall be associated to the glorious general assembly of holy and happy souls, and to the most excellent part of God's creation, with whom they shall cultivate an eternal friendship and harmony; and, which is chiefly to be considered, where they shall be admitted to the immediate presence of the Deity, and shall be transformed, as far as they are capable of it, into the divine likeness. Such is the happiness the gospel setteth before us, and which furnisheth a motive fitted to work upon the worthiest minds. And the being animated with the hopes of such a reward hath nothing mean or mercenary in it, but rather is an argument of a great and noble soul.'

"As to the fear of punishment, his lordship, although inconsistently with what he in other places asserts, (in vol. ii. p. 273, of his Characteristics,) says, that although fear may be allowed to be ever so low or base, 'yet, religion being a discipline, and progress of the soul towards perfection, the motive of the reward and punishment is primary and of the highest moment with us; till being capable of more sublime instructions we are let from this servile state to the glorious service of affection and love.'

"It may be also remarked, that after a wicked man has been roused by the terrors of the Lord, if he continue to obey the good motions of the Spirit, God then gives him a clean heart, and renews a right spirit within him. He then begins to love God and fears to offend him, fears to be separated from him and his people for ever. The fear of hell is scarcely remembered by a real Christian: but having taken God for his portion, for his supreme happiness, he loves God, because God first loved him, and his greatest fear is lest he should do anything to displease him. He can heartily and truly say to God,

'———————— Thou art my all!
My strength in age, my rise in low estate,
My soul's ambition, pleasure, wealth! My world.
My light in darkness! and my life in death!
My boast through time! bliss through eternity.'—

"But to return. Although I imbibed his lordship's refined notions of virtue, and for many years, at times, talked much in his lordship's strain, I found those notions insufficient to preserve me from falling into some vicious courses. Nothing but the belief of the gospel could induce me entirely to renounce the vices and follies of the world, and to live godly, righteously, and soberly, in so ungodly and dissipated an age. The motives held out by other systems are insufficient to restrain the passions and evil propensities of man.

"Yet was I so attached to infidelity, and so blinded by it, as not to believe its evil tendency, until for some time I had observed how much the morals of men, in every rank and station, had suffered in a great part of Europe; and that every kind of vice was gaining ground in proportion as infidel books and principles were disseminated. I then began to see that religion must before have had great influence on the morals of mankind, and in that point of view must be very valuable in society; and this brought on more serious reflections.

"I have for many years taken in several of the reviews of new publications, which are published monthly, and I now began to read some of the extracts which the reviewers make from sermons and other books in divinity. In those extracts I frequently found weighty arguments in favour of Christianity. About a year past in this way, during which time I was in rather a careless suspense, and yet I was more attentive to my words and actions; and by degrees I began to relish divine subjects, and found that they elevated the mind and filled the soul with sublime ideas. I now began to read a little in the bible, and took some pleasure in it; and I became more and more serious and thoughtful. I had nearly finished a second volume of my Life, which I intended soon to publish. I now read it over again, and cropped out and put in again and again, as I thought that I had treated serious subjects with too much levity; but after all the alterations, I was not

satisfied that in writing against fanaticism and enthusiasm, I had not said what might hurt some weak Christians, or what might be by freethinkers brought against Christianity. I was now also afraid, lest by ridiculing and laughing at enthusiasm and fanaticism, I should not only laugh some out of their enthusiasm, but of their religion also. For these and other reasons of the same nature I thought it best not to publish it, by which I have disappointed some of my laughter-loving aquaintance.

"As soon as I had acquired a relish for religious subjects, I wished to promote it in others, and therefore begun with Mrs Lackington. Mrs L. is in her moral conduct one of the most perfect beings I ever saw.

'Her life's as moral as the preacher's tongue.'

Her reason for being so was 'because she always thought she ought to be as good as she could.' She, like some other ladies, had studied well, and very well understood the art of dressing elegantly, but had not the least knowledge of religion beyond that of being as good as she could; and by the bye, it were to wished that all ladies even knew as much as that. As to going to church, or private devotion, she could not see of what use it could be to her. As she wanted for nothing, she did not know what she could pray for, she had never done any person any harm; she had never slandered, backbited, or ridiculed any person, nor did she know that she had committed any other sin, and so she had no need of praying for pardon.

"In this state of affairs I sent to my late partners for Secker's Lectures on the Catechism, Gilpin's Lectures on the same, Wilson's Sermons, 4 vols., and Gilpin's Sermons. These are very plain discourses, easy to be understood, and calculated to leave a very lasting impression on the mind. These excellent sermons Mrs L. and I read together, and while they

convinced her, that being 'as good as she could' was perfectly right, and of the utmost importance; yet that there was something more in religion. They also made me more in love with Christianity. I also sent for Bishop Watson's Apology for the Bible, in Letters to T. Paine; Bishop Porteus's Compendium of the Evidences of Christianity, Butler's Divine Analogy, Paley's Evidences of Christianity, Pilgrim's Good Intent, Pascal's Thoughts, Addison's Evidences of Christianity, Conibeare on Revealed Religion, Madam de Genlis's Religion the only Basis of Happiness and sound Philosophy, with Observations on pretended modern Philosophers, 2 vols., Jenkin's Reasonableness and Certainty of Christianity; and several others of the same tendency. Those excellent defences of revealed religion I read through, during which I had many struggles; in the beginning I sometimes cried out in the words of Thomas, 'Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief:' before I had read out those defences, I was not only almost, but altogether persuaded to be a Christian. And I hape that I shall always endeavour to live as becometh the gospel of Christ; and, at times, I feel an humble confidence that God has, or will, pardon all my past sins for the sake of Christ, and by his grace enable me to persevere in well doing to the end of this transitory life, and then admit me into that state where the wonders of his grace and the mysteries of his providence shall be more clearly understood.

"I meant to inform you, that besides those books already mentioned, I sent for Bishop Horne's Sermons, 4 vols., Carr's Sermons, Blair's Sermons, 5 vols., Scott's Christian Life, 5 vols., several learned and sensible expositions of the Bible; Calmet's Dictionary of the Bible, with the Fragments; Josephus's Works, Prideaux's Connections, 4 vols., Mrs H. More's Works, and various other excellent works. For some time one sermon was read on every Sunday, but soon Mrs L. began to like them, and then two or

three were read in the course of the week; at last one at least was read every day, and very often part of some other book in divinity; as Mrs L. said that she preferred such kind of reading far beyond the reading of novels. So that for some time we have read more books in divinity than on any other subjects; and now Mrs L. sees very important reasons for going to church, sacrament, &c.

"I now sit down to give you a few more particulars relating to my conversion to Christianity. My conversion was not instantaneous, but progressive; for, in retreating from the cause of infidelity, I disputed every inch of ground before I relinquished it. I found it impossible long to remain a downright atheist, but was sceptical for some years; and I even had an atheistical pamphlet, which was hard to be come at, reprinted, on hearing that the author had in great haste taken away nearly the whole of his own impression from the different booksellers where they had been left for sale. I also advised a Scotch bookseller to reprint another work in the cause of infidelity; which he did, and I purchased many of the impression and sold them. During this period I did not think that the belief, or disbelief, of any article of faith had any influence on the morals of mankind.

"About nine or ten years since, one of the French emigrants wanted me very much to print a translation from the French of an atheistical work; but having begun to see the bad effects of such publications, he could not prevail on me to have anything to do with him or his works; nor from that time do I recollect vending any of the new productions of that kind, or any prohibited democratical work; indeed I never would disseminate any disloyal publications, but steadily ever resisted the temptations on that head, even from men of high rank and title.

"I for many years had doubts as to the immortality of the soul, and, at intervals, disbelieved that doctrine; but as I occasionally read the Night

Thoughts of Dr Young, his strong arguments in favour of the soul's immateriality and immortality, prevented me from settling in unbelief on that important article. I also once dreamed, (pray do not laugh and think me still dreaming,) that I saw the finest poem I had ever read in my life; on which I reasoned thus. As I never saw any composition equal to that which I read in my dream; and as from the ideas which I retained of it when I awoke, it appeared a thousand times more beautiful than anything I could compose when awake, therefore my soul must be immaterial; for otherwise I could not, while in a state of sleep, have combined and arranged such a variety of beautiful and delightful ideas as to me appeared a new creation. On this head bishop Butler says, 'that we have no reason to think our organs of sense percipients, is confirmed by instances of persons losing some of them, the living beings themselves, their former occupiers, remaining unimpaired. It is confimed also by the experience of dreams; by which we find we are at present possessed of a latent, and, what would otherwise be an unimagined, unknown power of perceiving sensible objects, in as strong and lively a manmanner without our external organs of sense as with them."

These details of his re-conversion are occasionally interlarded with *naïve* remarks upon more worldly matters, as will be seen by that part of the following extract which relates to cheap printing.

" About eight years since, the being and providence of God were a good deal impressed on my mind, so that I often reflected on those important subjects in my garden, in the fields, in bed, in short in all places. The principles and duties of natural religion had some influence on my mind and conduct. I sometimes went to church, where I felt a spirit of devotion; so that I found my heart engaged in the prayers, and

felt some degree of thankfulness to God. I also felt the same spirit of devotion at times when not at church. Nor could I help admiring the character of Christ; his precepts also appeared to me perfectly well calculated to promote both public and private happiness.

"In this state of mind I went quietly and contentedly on for some years. As I had no relish for the ridiculous pursuits of those around me, my amusement was reading, or, now and then, scribbling.

"I at last (as I have before informed you) began to read some extracts from books on divinity, which I found in the reviews. Those extracts gave me a more thoughtful turn, and left my mind open to conviction. The first entire work that I read in defence of revealed religion was archdeacon Paley's View of the Evidences of Christianity. This very excellent work I perhaps never should have read, had I not met with a pirated edition of it, (the whole being printed in one volume duodecimo, on decent paper,) which I bought bound for three and sixpence. I ever was disgusted and put out of humour when I saw any work spaced out with leads, and other contrivances used to enlarge its bulk, and to make it sell for four times the price it might be well afforded at: there are many thousands of my mind who will not purchase where such extortion is practised. The work in question might be handsomely printed in one volume (instead of two) octavo, for such as wish for a handsome edition; and for such as wish to have it cheap, it might be printed on a decent paper, in duodecimo, and sold bound for three shillings and sixpence: were this done there would be no bounds to the sale of it, as thousands would be given away, and very great good done; and the publisher would in the end get more by it. I would just observe also, that when books in divinity are published at such extravagant prices, the authors (who, sometimes having sold or given away their copyright, have no hand in

setting the prices) are blamed and looked upon as extortioners, while they are enforcing the pure doctrines and precepts of the gospel.—But, to return from this digression.

"By the time I had gone through this very able and convincing work once, I was effectually humbled, and obliged to cry out, God be merciful to me a dreadful sinner! I was obliged to confess, that the wisdom, power, and love of God were displayed in the gospel.

"But although I was convinced that the gospel was a revelation from God, yet I had great doubts as to the dispensations contained in the Old Testament: nor did I think the New Testament an inspired work: in short, I gave little more credit to either the Old or New Testament, than I did to Xenophon or Livy. As I believed that Xenophon and Livy were honest men, and faithful historians, I therefore credited their narrations. And even in this view of the authors of the New Testament, I could not help believing that the Christian religion was a revelation of the will of God. On the same evidence I saw that I ought to believe the Old Testament dispensations were from God; yet the various objections which unbelievers have repeatedly made to the Jewish dispensation, together with many texts in the Old Testament, were difficulties I could not get over, until I had read part of Paley again: and also the third enlarged edition of the first volume, and the second edition of the second volume of Jenkin's Reasonableness and Certainty of the Christian Religion. This very extraordinary, learned, and sensible work, gave me ample satisfaction on those heads:—and it is worth remarking, that this work was written before Tindal, Collins, Morgan, &c. wrote their objections and misrepresentations, which makes them the more inexcusable. I have induced several of the clergy to look into this masterly work, who now think it a performance that discovers great reading, great abilities, and biblical learning.

"When I had satisfied myself on the above heads, I still had my doubts as to some of the mysteries of the Christian religion. The divinity of Christ, the doctrine of the Trinity, and the atonement made by Christ, &c., I could not believe, because I could not comprehend them. I believed that Christ was sent by God to give mankind a pure sytem of morality, to assure us of the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, ahd future rewards and punishments: and that by his perfect life, his sufferings and death, he had given us an excellent example. Further than this I could not believe, until I had again, and again, consulted the scriptures, various commentators, and the works of many other learned divines; from whom I received great assistance, particulary from Jenkin, and also from bishop Butler's Analogy of Religion, an exceedingly valuable work. In this study I have employed a very large portion of my time, and in it I have found a lasting source of pleasure and delight.

"After all my investigation, although I assent to the truth of those doctrines, I do not pretend that I comprehend them. I only believe them because I think they are taught in the Old Testament, and by Christ and his apostles in the New Testament."

The passage about to be supplied furnishes a curious specimen of the light careless manner in which virulent scandals may be disseminated; and certainly Mr Lackington makes a poor story of it as regards himself, as no man should have printed such very suspicious documents without being fully satisfied of their authenticity.

"I am also sorry that in my Memoirs I inserted two letters said to be written by Mr Wesley. When I inserted them I informed my readers that I copied them from a pamphlet entitled 'A Letter to the Rev. T.

Coke, LL.D. and Mr Moore, by an old Member [of Mr Wesley's Society]. I was induced to believe those letters to be genuine, partly by their bearing some resemblance to Mr Wesley's style and manner, but more so from the notice which was printed at the end of the second letter, and is as follows:

"'Should any one entertain a doubt concerning the forgoing letters being written by Mr Wesley, the author can produce the originals, for the satisfaction of such, if they will take the trouble to call on the publisher, who has his address, and will refer them to him.'

"When I transcribed these letters from the above pamphlet, the third edition of my Memoirs was in the press; and as the printer was nearly come to the part where I wished them to be introduced, I sent the copy off in a hurry, and then set off to my house at Merton.

"Some time after these extraordinary letters had been printed in my Memoirs, I was not quite satisfied that I had omitted to see the originals. Upon which I sent my head shopman, with my compliments to the author of the pamphlet, and requested a sight of those original letters; but, instead of complying with my request, he returned for answer, that he had returned the letters to the persons to whom they were written.

"When I found that he could not, or would not produce the originals, I was more dissatisfied with myself for having inserted them in my Memoirs.

"In all subsequent editions of those Memoirs I should have left them out; but after they had found a place there, had they been omitted, I thought my readers might be displeased, and think that I had not done right in omitting them; others that never saw the pamphlet from whence I informed my readers I had transcribed them, might think they were fabricated by me, and that I had from conscious guilt left

them out. Upon the whole, I thought it best not to omit them: so that they are to be found in about twelve thousand copies of the Memoirs of my Life.

"I have ever, in subsequent editions, informed my readers that I could not be certain as to their authenticity, as I had sent to the author and requested a sight of the originals, and that he had returned the above answer. I also shewed the pamphlet from whence I transcribed them to all that desired to see it; and I still keep it by me. It was printed for J. Luffman, Alfred buildings, Windmill street, Moorfields; H. D. Symons, No. 20, Paternoster row; J. Phillips, No. 27, City road; and J. Cottle, Bristol.

"Supposing Mr Wesley to be the author of the first of these letters, he could not have been an honest man, or sincere in what he professed to believe, as I ever believed him to be until I saw that letter. Even while I was an infidel I respected him so much for these qualities, and his unwearied disinterested labours, in what he believed to be the cause of God and the good of mankind, that it always gave me pleasure to see him pass by my shop. After I had seen those letters I was often in doubt as to his real character. When I reflected on his primitive manner of living, his sufferings, his unparalleled labours for more than sixty years together, &c., I could hardly think it possible for a human being to be for such a length of time, and in such a manner, only acting a feigned part; for had he been the author of the first letter he he must have been a hypocrite, or a freethinker, or both."

The complete recovery to Methodism of our wandering bibliopolist is thus narrated.

"In a former letter I told you that I sent for Mr Wesley's Life, but I did not inform you of some particulars relating to that circumstance. About a year ago, a respectable clergyman frequently called on me,

and I told him that I was sorry that I had inserted in my Memoirs the two letters that were ascribed to Mr Wesley. He joined with me in wishing that I had not been so imposed upon. Not long after this he brought from Bristol Dr Whitehead's Life of Mr Wesley, 2 vols. 8vo., I having expresssed a wish to see in what state of mind Mr Wesley died. After having satisfied myself on that head, I returned the set of books, as I had no intention to read any more of the work but the account of his death. In spring last, I wished again to see the account of his death, and I sent to the Temple of the Muses for the work; and after I had again read the account of his death, and his character, as drawn by several hands, and transcribed them, as in two former letters you have seen, I put by the set of books, having no inclination to be made acquainted with his ministerial proceedings. But after having read such a number of tracts, as mentioned above, and various volumes in divinity, and much in the bible, I again took up Dr Whitehead's Life of Mr Wesley, and as I saw by the title-page that it contained an account of Mr Wesley's ancestors and relations, the life of Mr Charles Wesley, (whom I had often heard preach,) and a history of Methodism, I requested Mrs L. to help me in reading it through.

"To describe the conflict, and the different commotions which passed in my mind while we were reading this excellent work, is impossible. I have been instructed, delighted, much confounded, and troubled. That divine power which has been felt by thousands and tens of thousands under the preaching of Mr Wesley, his brother Charles, and others of his preachers, again humbled me in the dust. I sunk down at the feet of Christ and washed them with my tears. Sorrow, joy, and love, were sweetly mingled together in my soul. I once more, after so many years, knew a little of what these lines express:

'The godly grief, the pleasing smart,
The meltings of a broken heart.
The seeing eye, the feeling sense,
The mystic joy of penitence.

The guiltless shame, the sweet distress,
Th' unutterable tenderness,
The genuine, meek humility,
The wonder, 'why such love to me?'

The o'erwhelming power of saving grace,
The sight that veils the seraph's face,
The speechless awe that dares not move,
And all the silent heaven of love.'

"I was now convinced that the pardoning love of God, which forty years since was first manifested to my soul, was a divine reality, and not the effect of a heated imagination. Thousands, and tens of thousands, who are gone to glory, have borne testimony to the truth of this doctrine; and I learn that there are still tens of thousands of living witnesses to the same glorious truth."

In respect to his own conduct, certain practical results are thus described.

"Having those serious views of sacred subjects, I was more than ever desirous that the poor ignorant thoughtless people in my neighbourhood should be awakened and made sensible of their dreadful state; but how to effect this I was at a loss: for in giving away the religious tracts, I found that some of the farmers and their children, and also three-fourths of the poor, could not read; that some of the farmers hated the clergy on the score of tythes; so that some of those that now and then went to church were not likely to receive benefit from those they hated. Others of them would neither go to church themselvers nor let their families go. Many of the poor also lived in the total neglect of all public worship; and spent the

sabbath, some in ale-houses, others at pitch-and-toss, fives, and other games; some in gossiping near each others' cottages, sometimes quarrelling, generally cursing, swearing, talking obscenely, &c.; others employed that day in going from one farmer to another to look at and take jobs of work.

"Such as do go to church, the service being but once in the day, spend the other part of the day in the manner mentioned above. Nor do the farmers in general observe the sabbath any better than the poor; their time is often taken up in shewing their cattle, sheep, hogs, &c., to butchers; in letting jobs of work; in viewing the work that has been done in the week, or in pointing out what is to be done the week ensuing; in visiting each other, and making merry, &c. Our churchyard is called the market. Here, before and after the service, they talk over the prices that their goods sold for in the week past, and what they intend to sell for the next week.

"I was also affected to see the children of the poor brought up in ignorance and vice. About four years since, I and a few of my neighbours began a Sunday and day school, yet we found that some could not be prevailed upon to send their children to it, and the few that do come are so corrupted by the wicked examples which are set them by their parents, and other children, that very little good is so be expected from that quarter.

"After much serious reflection on the general disregard of religion, and moral depravity, I resolved, if possible, to get some of Mr Wesley's preachers to come and preach to them. After having been separated from them between twenty and thirty years, and having laughed at and ridiculed them, you may suppose that my feelings on this occasion were not very pleasant; but I knew that they had learned of their divine Master to return good for evil, and that they also went about doing good, and made it the grand business of their lives to warn sinners to fly from the

wrath to come; so that at last I went on to Thornbury and found out a gentleman who is a member of their small society there, and desired that the next preacher that came there would do me the favour of calling on me. On Saturday, the 1st of October 1803, Mr Ward, one of the preachers in the Dursley circuit, paid me a visit. To this excellent young man I communicated my concern for the stupid, poor unhappy wretches around me; and although he had to preach three times the next day, at nine in the morning and at half-past five in the evening at Thornbury, and at Elberton, three or four miles from Thornbury, at two; and although his health is so much impaired by preaching, that it was lately thought that he never would be able to preach more; yet this kind-hearted young man cheerfully agreed, and did preach on a common called Alvestone-Down, a quarter of a mile from my house, at eleven o'clock, to about sixty or seventy people, small and great. All were still and attentive. Mrs L. conversed with some of them afterwards, who expressed thankfulness for having heard a sermon that they could understand, as they said that they could not understand the sermons at church, because there were so many fine words in them. Blessed be God, the poor have the gospel preached unto them in a way that they can understand, in a thousand places in England. And here also I cannot help remarking, that even while I was an infidel, I often regretted that the clergy did not adapt their discourses to the capacities of their hearers; as I have found that many of the farmers, and most of the poor, know very little of what they have ever heard preached in most of their parish churches. I am very confident that not one tenth part of country congregations are able to understand what they hear preached. What a pity it is that the clergy, particularly such as live in the country, do not, in their compositions, imitate the fine, plain language of th

common-prayer book! But to return from this digression.

"That I should again hear a Methodist preacher under a hedge was matter of surprise; but what was much more surprising, the preacher gave notice that there would be preaching in my house on the evening of the Friday se'nnight following. This affair has been, and is still, the subject of conversation for many miles around. Letters to various parts of England and Wales have spread this extraordinary news nearly through the kingdom. Perhaps you will be a little surprised when I inform you that Mrs L., on the evening before, went about three miles round part of the parish, calling at every cottage in her way, to inform them that a sermon would be preached on the down the next morning. With this information the poor people were much pleased, and promised her to be there. Mrs L. also attended the sermon. It was the first time she ever heard preaching out of a church. She was however much pleased to hear such an excellent discourse, and one so well adapted to the understandings of the hearers. Mr Ward, the preacher, is not quite three and twenty years of age, and if he continues to preach as much as he has done for three years past, I fear that he will not live to be much older. But he is so zealous in his Master's cause, so intent on bringing poor lost sinners to Christ, that he cares but little about his body. He is one of Madeley, where Mr Fletcher was vicar; and although he was not converted under his preaching, yet he appears to partake much of the same spirit that actuated that extraordinary servant of God. I also heard Mr Ward that day at nine o'clock in the morning, and at half-past five in the evening, in Mr Wesley's chapel in Thornbury. All his sermons were excellent; and I found it was good to be there.

"I believe we should have had a much larger congregation on the down, had not about five hundred

volunteers been at that time exercising about half a mile from where Mr Ward preached.

"To break the sabbath seems to be a wrong way to conquer our enemies. Our churches are nearly empty at those times; as the people of all descriptions are drawn to the place of exercise. There, cakes, gingerbread, &c., are hawked about for sale; so that it appears more like a fair day than the Lord's day."

The next extract pithily adverts to certain benefits occasionally derivable from the labours of the Methodists, among the lowly and ignorant, which have been too obvious to be denied by the more candid even among their most zealous opponents:

"Notwithstanding all that I have said against the Methodists in the Memoirs of my Life, an impartial observer may see, even from my own account, that those people were of very great benefit to me. The very great alteration which took place in my life after I first heard them preach must have been remarked. Before that time I was a thoughtless, careless, wicked, boy: from that hour I was totally changed. I then was anxious to learn to read, and it was not long before I constantly read ten chapters in the bible every day. I also read and learned hymns and religious tracts. For about five years I lived a very religious life, but, through inexperience, I was overcome and carried away by the dissipated scenes of a contested election. After having lived a year in vice, by only once hearing Mr Wesley preach I was effectually prevailed upon to renounce my sinful practices, and was enabled to live in the fear of God. About two years after, I married a very pious woman of Mr Wesley's society; and in the midst of great affliction, which involved us in great poverty also, I was not only contented, but frequently experienced such a happiness in my mind, as often rose even to raptures. We had been married only about four years, when

this excellent young woman died, in the full assurance of hope.——Although during my wife's illness and death, I lay in a state that was thought to be past recovery, yet even in this situation I was so happy as even to astonish some who visited me.

"The readers of my Life may also recollect that the Methodists visited me and my wife during this great affliction; and, my business being at a stand, (in consequence of my having no one to attend to my customers,) they lent me money to defray the expenses incurred during my long illness, and locked up my shop, to prevent me from being plundered of all I had. I might also mention many other favours that I received from them, which made me say in my Life, that they were in 'general a friendly honest-hearted, sincere people.'

"I perhaps ought also to observe, that if I had never heard the Methodists preach, in all probability I should have been at this time a poor, ragged, dirty, cobler, peeping out from under a bulk with a snuffy nose and a long beard; for it was by their preaching that I was taught to call upon God for his grace to enable me to turn from my vicious course of life, and through which I became a real Christian. It was by their means also that I was excited to improve a little my intellectual faculties. It was through them that I got an amiable helpmate in my first wife; and she likewise will have reason to all eternity to remember the Methodists with gratitude, for having been the instruments of her conversion; for before she heard them preach she had not even the form of godliness, much less the power of it. It was also through them that I got the shop in which I first set up for a book-seller. It is very likely, that had I never heard these people, I should have now been an old drunken, debauched, fellow, like the generality of journeyman shoemakers; and it is well known that many, very many, instances of the same kind might be adduced; great numbers by being connected with them have

learned to be industrious and frugal, by which means they have been enabled to live in credit, to provide something for their children, and to support themselves in their old age."

The foregoing extracts, which, regarded in contact with the preceding Memoirs, are at least curious and characteristically illustrative, may suitably enough terminate with a tissue of rhapsody, which shews in a very significant manner the shifting nature of certain men's minds, and proves what indeed has long been well known, that persons who lightly rush to one extreme are always the more likely to rebound to the other.

"When I look into my Memoirs I shudder to see what I have done. I have wantonly treated of, and sported with the most solemn and precious truths of the gospel. O God, lay not this sin to my charge! Other infidels have obscured, as much as they were able, the external evidences of Christianity: but I made a thrust at its vital part. There are many thousands who never had time or opportunity, or who have been, somehow or other, prevented from investigating the external evidences of the Christian religion, who yet are as much assured of its divine authority as they are of their own existence. They know that Christ is come in the flesh; that they are born of God; that they are passed from death into life; that they were once blind, that now they see; that old things are done away, and all things are become new; that they were once miserable, but are now happy; they once were without God in the world, but now by that faith which is the operation of God, the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, by this precious faith, they can say my Father and my God. They can call Christ Lord by the Holy Ghost. They know what is the communion of saints, and often sit together in heavenly places in

Christ Jesus, and are filled with the fulness of God; and they know that when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved they have a building, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

"It was this internal evidence which made the martyrs triumph in the midst of the flames; and this evidence, neither the pretended friends, nor the open enemies of Christianity, will ever be able to destroy. Christianity, without this, is a body without a soul. And all those who endeavour to invalidate this internal evidence, are blind, knowing nothing; are false spies that bring an evil report of the good land; they are in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity, and have neither part nor lot in the matter; and, sooner or later, they will be found to be fighters against God.

'Jesus, vouchsafe a pitying ray,
Be thou my guide, be thou my way,
To glorious happiness!
Ah! write the pardon on my heart,
And whensoe'er I hence depart,
Let me depart in peace.'

"I suppose you are ready to ask, how it was possible for me, who once was enlightened, and had tasted the good work of God, and the powers or the world to come; how it was possible for me to sink into ignorance, blindness, and infidelity? Ah, my friend, nothing is more easy. As a real Christian is one that has been called out of darkness into marvellous light; so, as long as his eye is single, his soul is full of light, and he walks in the light, as God is in the light, and in him there is no darkness at all; yet, if he turn back again into Egypt, he will again be involved in Egyptian darkness. The sun of righteousness will no longer shine upon him. Adam, as soon as he disobeyed his God, at once lost his favour and likeness, and sunk into a state of darkness and ignorance, and attempted to hide himself from the all-seeing eye

amongst the trees. And when a renewed soul falls again into a course of sin, he is at last smitten with blindness, and he gropes but cannot find the door. The candle of the Lord no more shines upon his head. They are blind, and cannot see afar off; and have forgot that they were purged from their sins. They will curse and swear that they know not the man. As they did not like to retain the knowledge of God, he gives them over to blindness and hardness of heart. They have quenched the spirit, and done despite unto it. They no longer know the things which belong to their peace, they being hid from their eyes. They have eyes that see not, and ears that hear not.

"This evidence I have attempted to invalidate. God be merciful to me a sinner!

'Jesus, let thy pitying eye
Call back a wandering sheep:
False to thee, like Peter, I
Would fain like Peter weep.

Let me be by grace restor'd;
On me all long-suffering shewn,
Turn, and look upon me, Lord,
And break my heart of stone.'

"I have, in my Life, said that the Methodists have driven people out of their mind, made them commit suicide, &c. But I solemnly declare, that I never knew an instance of the kind from my own personal knowledge. I have seen it asserted in pamphlets wrote against them, and also in newspapers, and I have been told that such things have happened; and upon such kind of evidence I have shamefully followed others in relating those stories after them.

"In finding fault with the Methodist preachers for endeavouring to awaken all such as were never converted, every one may see that in blaming them I also blamed the prophets, Christ and his apostles, and also the Church of England, and most other reformed

churches. The Methodist preachers often tell their hearers, in the words of our church, in her 9th article, 'That every man is far gone from original righteousness; is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore every person born into the world deserveth God's wrath and damnation.' What the Methodists mean by conviction for sin is the same as our church has set down in the communion service: 'We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us; and the burthen is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life.' That which displeases the infidels and pretended Christians on this head is, the Methodists insist on the necessity of feeling what we repeat, lest we be found solemn mockers of God.

"In the scripture this conviction is called, being pricked to the heart, under which sinners are constrained to inquire, 'What shall we do to be saved?' To cry, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' &c. And under this conviction David roared for the disquietude of his soul, and watered his bed with his tears. Jeremiah saith, 'Be not a terror to me.' In another place God says, 'I will make thee a terror to thyself.' Solomon says, 'The spirit of a man may sustain his (bodily) infirmities; but a wounded spirit who can bear?' This is what is intended by a contrite spirit, a broken heart, &c.

"So that what I have pointed out as a dreadful state is, I presume, quite scriptural; and must be, more or less, felt by every person before he will see the necessity of coming to Christ for pardon and salvation; before he can be born again, or converted; or before he can be justified, as St Paul says, and as our church says also, 'before he ever can be changed

by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit; before he can perfectly love God, or worthily magnify his holy name.'

"But as an infidel I cared for none of these things, and so ridiculed them all. The remembrance of which has in reality been to me grievous, and the burthen intolerable! May Almighty God make all the inventors, and other wanton relaters of such stories, feel, before it is too late, the same sorrow and sincere repentance! And may they also obtain mercy through the all-atoning blood of Christ, who forgiveth all manner of sins and blasphemies of such as truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel."

It is only necessary to add, that Mr Lackington retired from the bookselling business with a competent fortune, the reward of his own ingenuity, industry, and tact in the way of cheap reprinting, in 1798, leaving Mr George Lackington, a third cousin, at the head of the firm. He took up his residence at Thornbury, in Gloucestershire, in the neighbourhood of his father-in-law, Mr Turton, a respectable attorney-at-law, of Alvestone, about three miles from Thornbury. He subsequently purchased two estates in Alvestone, on one of which there was a genteel house, in which he made various improvements, and took up his abode, keeping a carriage and living in great respectability. Within a year of the appearance of his "Confessions," he erected a small chapel on his premises, in which ministers of the Wesleyan Methodists connection regularly officiated; and ultimately he became himself a local preacher of that body, and held forth in his turn in the neighbouring villages. His time was now chiefly occupied in visiting the sick, distributing religious tracts, relieving the distressed poor, and preaching; and he spared no pains to convince all his acquaintances, that the manner in which he had spent his time in London was far from affording him pleasure on reflection. He also expressed great sorrow for the manner in which he had spoken of the

Methodists in his Memoirs. In 1806 he removed from Alvestone to Taunton, the town in which he served his apprenticeship, where he purchased some houses, and expended 3000*l.* in erecting a chapel for the use of the Wesleyan Methodists, to which he added a salary of 150*l.* per annum for the preacher. In front of this building appears the following inscription :—

"This Temple is erected as a monument of God's mercy, in convincing an Infidel of the important Truths of Christianity.

"Man, consult thy whole existence, and be safe."

The Wesleyan Methodists continued to preach in this chapel until 1810, when a dispute arose between Mr Lackington and the Conference, respecting the conveyance of the same, according to the Wesleyan scheme of church government, from which the latter could not deviate. The terms upon which the conveyance was required being deemed illiberal by Mr Lackington, he requested the president of the New Connection, named Kilhamites,* to send him a preacher. His request was attended to, and a Mr Henley was despatched to Taunton to preach in Mr Lackington's chapel; and, as he possessed considerable eloquence and abilities, it was much frequented during the year that he officiated. At the expiration of that period, however, being informed that the principles of Mr Henley bordered on Calvinism, Mr Lackington applied once more to the Conference, who sent him a Mr Beaumont, with whom he soon after engaged in a paper war, which at length terminated in the purchase of the chapel by the Wesleyans for 1000*l.* Mr Lackington continued to reside at Taun-

* So called from Alexander Kilham, formerly a Wesleyan preacher of some note; but, dissenting from his brethren on the subject of church government, he was expelled the Connection, on which event he raised a society of his own, which has since been called "The New Connection."

ton for two years longer, when his health declining, he determined to live by the sea-side, and finally chose Budleigh Sulterton, in Devonshire, for his future abode. Here he built another chapel, which cost him 2000*l*., and appointed Mr Hawkey, a retired captain in the army, whose father had been recorder of Exeter, his minister, with a salary of 150*l*. per annum. This salary, with the use of the chapel, Mr Hawkey was to enjoy for his life, after which, the latter was to fall to the Wesleyan connection, and the money appropriated to secure the salary to be divided among the donor's relations.

Soon after this event the health of the eccentric subject of this little volume rapidly declined, and he became subject to epileptic fits. These were succeeded by apoplexy and paralysis, under the effect of which he survived longer than might have been expected, until at length his decease took place on the 22nd of November 1815, in the seventieth year of his age, and his remains were interred in Budleigh church-yard.

It is easy to find more important autobiographies than that of this pertinacious bookseller, sceptic and methodist, but few are more lively, curious, or characteristic.

INDEX.

PAGE

AUTHOR'S motives for publishing his Life..... 14
Author's gratitude to his customers 7
Author's thanks to some booksellers 8
Additions since the first edition, why not printed separately 22
All alive, alive O! in W—— cathedral 39
Author's birth not predicted, nor his nativity calculated 31
——— bound apprentice to a shoemaker 50
——— learns to read; is born again 56
——— his rigid application to study of divinity..... 65
——— leaps out of a two-story window to hear a Methodist sermon 67
——— becomes a backslider 79
——— arrives at Bristol 82
——— forms a friendship with Mr John Jones 89
——— strange mode of life 99
——— composes songs before he could write 92
——— relapses into Methodism 94
——— converts his friends 96
——— great talents for controversy..... 100
——— lucubrations like to prove fatal..... .. 100
——— lives on bread and tea only 103
——— travels to Bridgewater, Taunton, Exeter, and Kingsbridge 105
——— teaches himself to write 106
——— leaves Kingsbridge 107
——— returns to Bristol .... ib.
——— falls in love with a dairy-maid; his spiritual courtship..... 109
——— attaches himself to Hannah Allen, another holy sister 111
——— married to Nancy Smith, the dairy-maid 114

PAGE
Author begins the world with a halfpenny 115
——— lives on water-gruel to support his sick wife .. 118
——— sets off for, and arrives in, London 121
——— is shocked at the wickedness of London; his consolation 122
——— goes to receive his legacy, loses part, commits a faux-pas 125
——— turns bookseller; his motive for so doing 130
——— marries Miss Turton..... 150
——— attention to metaphysics 157
——— quits the Methodists; some reasons why 158
——— general opinion of Methodists 172
——— cannot be rivalled in business 231
——— mode of stating his profits and expenses..... 258
——— visits his old masters..... 290
Amorous gentleman and blundering ostler, a story 84
Abstinence taught, but not practised, by preachers 158
Apple and old iron-stall keepers turn preachers 190
Almanack vender 49
An old buck tempted by his maid and the devil 75
A man to speak less of himself than he really is, is folly, not modesty 261
A man believes himself to be the Holy Ghost..... 188
Anecdotes very curious of very spiritual ladies 138
Anecdotes of very carnal and very spiritual ladies 142
Authors publishing and selling their own books never answers 227
Authors should be careful in choosing their publishers ib.
Address to covetuous tradesmen 256
Anecdote of an author's great expectations..... 226
Birth and genealogy of the author 31
Bayhorse, a story 38
Black and white devil, a story 42
Bowden family, characters of; their library 50
Bowden, George and John converted 55
Band meetings, account of 74
——, select, only for such as are perfect 76
Booksellers are benefited by our authors selling cheap 263
Baldwin, Mr, a strange story of 86
Bookselling succeeds with our hero 133
Bottomly, Shaw and Wheeler, save the author from ruin 149

PAGE
Buncle's Memoirs enlarges our hero's mind 155
Bookseller has his hair dressed on Saturday, and sleeps all night in his elbow chair 160
Biggs, John, a perfect man; his curious hand-bill.... ib.
Bakers threatened with damnation for baking meat on Sundays, a story..... 159
Booksellers destroy large numbers of books, to sell some dear 220
Books preserved by our hero, and sold cheap ..... ib.
Booksellers often prevent the sale of books sold by authors 227
Booksellers' liberality to authors, instances of 223
Bargain hunters, learned dissertation on 134
Bentley eats asses' flesh for conscience sake..... 188
Bookseller's shop an excellent school for knowledge .. 142
Book-clubs promote the sale of books 246
Books, sale of, extremely increased of late years..... ib.
Bank notes said to be found by our author in an old book 255
Brank, a remedy for scolds, described (with wood-cut) 273
Barrows, camps, fortifications, &c. 306
Buchanites, a curious sect of fanatics near Dumfries .. 184
Buchan (Lady) thought herself the Virgin Mary, &c. . 185
Blair's Sermons have a greater sale than either Sherlock's or White's 225
Benger, Elizabeth, a very extraordinary instance of female abilities 249
Books afford real and lasting pleasures to rich and poor 265
Blackbird's nest found in a skull 271
Children, a doubt if they should not be taught to despise unnatural fathers 35
Controversies, curious in the Bowden family 54
Children liable to damnation ..... ib.
Children in hell! ..... ib.
Class meeting, account of 73
Curious library of the author and his friend at Bristol 99
Chaplain of the author 106
Cowley's verses on envy 49
Chiswell street, our hero opens a shop there 133
Criminals, bad practice of Methodists towards them, under sentence of death 173

PAG
Cocks prevented from breaking the sabbath by treading hens on Sundays 176
Conference of Mr Wesley's preachers 192
Conversion at Kingswood ridiculed 202
Credit, inconveniences to tradesmen attending it; our hero resolves not to give any 214
Classics, translation of, read by our hero..... 233
Chariot set up by the author, with remarks on it..... 254
Crow's nest, remarkable one at Newcastle 270
Children educated as Methodists, never remain such .. 200
Cat longs for a fowl, and marks her kitten with wings 134
Circulating libraries increase the sale of books..... 247
Dunton, John, remarks on his life 29
Death of the author's master hastened by his sons turning Methodists 68
Death of the author's first wife during his illness 136
Dom Pernety's wonderful receipts 181
Death of Mr Dennis; his character..... 212
Difficulties attending the ready-money plan..... 214
Disasters in travelling from Darlington to Durham.... 274
Dropsy, broom tea an infallible remedy for 182
Droll scenes at booksellers' shops 243
Diffusing through the world immense number of books, gives our hero great pleasure 265
Epistle (poetical) to Mr Lackington on his Memoirs .. 25
Epigram, by our hero, on a Methodist preacher 107
Education, our author regrets the want of 238
Enlightening the minds of the lower orders makes them happier 250
Expenses of our hero proportioned to his income 253
Envious observations made on our author's expenses . 254
Edinburgh, North British hospitality, &c. 285
Epicure, a term wrong applied, pleasures, &c..... 103
Enthusiasm, its nature 167
Father of the author dies unregretted by his children 34
Fanatics in every age found their account in dreadful predictions 63
Fortune-teller foretold a person's death 88
Four hundred thousand pounds a-year collected by Mr Wesley's preachers..... ... 197
Freethinkers read by our hero 233

PAGE
Farmers and husbandmen now read 246
Four old people and four children supported by our hero 262
Father and mother of our author's first wife, unexpectedly discovered; a dreadful scene 297
Fanaticism worse than atheism 167
Fanatics in Poland killed their own children 171
"Goddy-mighty's little mutton" 97
Good consciences to the public of selling books cheap 263
Gentlemen and petty gentry act differently 293
G—— Mrs, leaves her husband and children to follow Wesley 141
Great men have foibles, instances of..... 182
Gregory, Dr, a remarkable quotation from, on ladies having learning 249
Germany, seven thousand living authors there..... 231
Ghost that loved poultry 44
Haunted houses, stories of..... 43
Hospital haunted in London 46
Horrid spectre appears 39
Higley's ghost 47
Huntingdon procures by prayer a pair of breeches, shoulder of mutton, and fish, &c. 68
Hill, an extraordinary quotation from 164
Hypocrites among the Methodists 172
Hints to the authors of the Encyclopedia Britannica and Biographia Britannica 281
Hume, on female devotion and gallantry 78
Humorous verses on Methodist preachers..... 193
Hill, Dr, earned by his pen in one year 1500*l*. 224
Introduction v
Invalids, absurd practice of, at watering places 300
Johnson, Dr, tea-table anecdote of 279
———— and the Lord Provost, anecdote of 280
———— and a lady, anecdote of 281
———— and David Hume, anecdote of..... 282
———— and a waterman, anecdote of ..... ib.
———— much prejudiced against the Scotch..... 283
Juvenile exploits of the author..... 36
Knowlan's child returns to life after it had been in the coffin five days 35
Kingsbridge, our hero's life there 105

PAGE
Kingswood school, large sums collected for, never applied to that use 198
Knowledge of books, how acquired by the author 232
Lavater, a quotation from, on women 77
Love feasts, account of 71
Lackington can afford to give more for libraries than those that sell dear..... 217
Lady killed, screaming set the horses going 277
Ladies allowed to scream on certain terms 278
Learned men are often unacquainted with men and manners 241
Ladies now read and are become rational companions; have a just taste for books..... 247
Ladies born deaf and dumb dance to music, &c..... 271
Lackington sells one hundred thousand volumes a-year 264
Lackington's epitaph on himself 307
Milk-woman drove mad by Methodists..... 159
Moorfields qualifications for preachers 190
Manuscripts, remarks on purchasing them 223
Miserable lives and untimely end of some opulent tradesmen 256
Mambury amphitheatre..... 206
Mary Hubbard's two old smocks 69
Mother of the author, her very extraordinary conduct.. 34
Methodists ruin the peace of mind of many innocent people 58
Methodistical conversion a dreadful state..... 59
Methodists are unhappy..... 62
——— their prophecy of the world being at an end on a certain day..... 62
——— are alarmed by a comet's tail 63
——— their treatment of our hero on his leaving their society..... 162
Methodist preachers, their number 192
Merton, our hero partly resides there 254
Norton's, Mrs, deed of gift to Reilly set aside..... 63
Nurses robbed our author and neglected him while his wife lay dead, and himself nearly so 148
Novels and romances read by our hero..... 235
New mode of valuing and purchasing libraries, by which the seller is sure to have the full value 219

PAGE
Ned Drugget's character suits our hero 253
Objection of some in selling to the author answered .. 217
Pie-merchant 37
Preachers, remarks on dull inanimate ones 50
Prayer-meetings of Methodists described 69
Pawnbrokers sell books and other articles not pawned.. 134
Prolific Methodists at Wellington and near Oxford.... 145
Pious dealer in sheeps' heads, tripe, &c. 175
Pious common-councilman's advertisement 176
Preachers, Wesley's, many very ignorant, often liked the better for being so 187
Play-house set on fire by a preacher..... 189
Partnership commenced with Mr D. 210
Partnership dissolved 211
Publishers often hinder the sale of books when the copyright remains the author's 226
Purchases, very large ones, made by the author 229
Profits, annual, of our author 257
Poor relations, the reason why the author does not decline business 260
Proofs that his cheap mode of selling has not been injurious, but beneficial, to booksellers 263
Predictions relative to our hero..... 295
Powder-mills, our hero narrowly escapes death 296
Partner in the business 261
Pitcairn, Dr, and the collier 88
Quotations from an extraordinary pamphlet against the Methodists, by an Old Member 195
Ready-money plan adopted to sell cheap..... 214
Rational assembly at our hero's house 236
Rousseau, an extraordinary quotation from 167
Ridicule and contempt the only punishment for fanaticism 171
Story of praying a person to death 87
Story of a Methodist poll-parrot 96
Shilling on the red cock..... 38
Supernatural appearances, opinion of 41
Shuter, Ned, was a Methodist 89
Stoics read and greatly admired by the author..... 101
Salesman and great coat, a story 124
Scruples of conscience in a bookseller 134
Swedenborgians increasing fast; their wonderful discoveries 183

PAGE
Sunday-schools promote the sale of books 250
Small profits and industry the real causes of the author's prosperity 255
Scarcity of valuable books in various parts of Great Britain; London the grand emporium 269
Symmon's Barrow, near Wellington, brought by the devil in his leathern apron 299
Stonehenge visited by our hero 306
Salisbury, a young woman there sold herself to the devil, an odd story 146
Swift's very curious verses, or his dream 166
Selden, a quotation from him on booksellers 231
Terrible instance of a real guilty conscience, attended with suicide 59
Taylor, a, strips to his shirt, and takes off his wig to preach 163
Theatrical entertainments much attended by our hero .. 235
Tinley, Mr, an extraordinary character 237
Travels of our hero in the north 267
Travels of our hero to the west of England, in 1791 .. 290
Turton, Miss Dorcas, her family character; is married to our hero 150
Thanksgiving note for being made perfect 161
Turpin (John) a Methodist preacher, tried at Exeter, and found guilty of stealing a horse, sent to Botany Bay 191
Tooke's anecdotes of Mr Wesley 196
Trifling circumstances produce great events 239
Tradesmen, remarks on their getting fortunes, and country seats, yet are unable to support existence .. 257
Tickets of admission to classes, bands, &c. 76
Wiredrawer sold when drunk to L——m as a dead subject 48
Watch nights, account of 72
Whitefield advised his people to attend Shuter's benefit 92
———, a very droll story of..... 108
Women, when converted, refuse to sleep with their husbands 140
Woman deprived of her senses by a Methodist, and her servant killed by fasting... 188
Wages of Methodist preachers 193
Wesley's death, funeral, &c..... 177

PAGE
Wesley's annual income, his disregard of money..... 179
——— "Primitive Physic" dangerous..... 180
——— ruled despotically 183
——— decease very injurious to Methodism ..... ib.
——— character by an Old Member, an epicure, a deist 199
——— extraordinary letter to a friend..... 204
——— amorous letter to a young lady..... .. 206
Woman visited her husband's tomb every day for two years, expecting him to rise 185
Women, panegyric on; more handsome women in Scotland among the higher classes than elsewhere..... 286
Women's extraordinary delicate mode of washing linen in Scotland 287
Wolstonecraft, Miss, a quotation from 247
Women, the reason why they are despised in eastern nations 248
Wellington, our hero's reception there in 1791 292
Watering-places, remarks on..... 300
———————, excellent academies for servants.... 304
———————, ways of spending time at 303
Weymouth visited by our author 305
Why tradesmen on the Continent are all rascals..... 294
Xeno found consolation, and turned philosopher at a bookseller's shop..... 245
Young's Night Thoughts preferred to a Christmas dinner 129
Young lady converted and debauched by a Methodist preacher 147
Sequel to the Life of James Lackington, containing extracts from his "Confessions," &c..... 311

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Lackington, James

Memoirs of the forty-five first years of the life of James Lackington, bookseller

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